



Connect Transit

AGENDA

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Tuesday, August 27, 2013

4:30 PM

Board Room
Connect Transit Operations Facility
351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call
- C. Public Comments
- D. Approval of Minutes of Previous Regular Meeting, July 30, 2013 (Page 1)
- E. Items Removed From Consent Agenda
- F. Consent Agenda
 - 1. Review and Approve August Disbursements (Page 15)
 - 2. Review and Approve July Financial Statements (Page 19)
 - 3. Review and Receive July Capital and Self-Insurance Reserve Fund Balances (Page 21)
 - 4. Review and Receive July Monthly Statistical Report (Page 23)
 - 5. Receive Minutes of Public Hearings on July 25 and July 30, 2013 (Pages 25 & 31)
- G. Old Business
- H. New Business
 - 1. Request for Approval to Purchase Bus Destination Signs (Page 39)
- I. General Manager's Report
 - 1. Strategic Planning Update
 - 2. Route Restructuring Update
 - 3. Upcoming Presentations



- J. Correspondence and Media (Page 41)
- K. Trustee Comments
- L. Request for Executive Session
- M. Adjournment

CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
July 30, 2013

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at the Bloomington City Hall, Council Chambers, Bloomington, Illinois on July 30, 2013 at 5:00 p.m.

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

TRUSTEES ABSENT:

CITY MANAGERS: David Hales, City of Bloomington

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
Roy Rickert, Operations Director
Dave White, Safety and Training Director
Ami Armitage, Executive Assistant Labor Relations
Jenifer Clark, Human Resources Director
Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director
Patrick Kuebrich, Finance Director
Tom Crouch, Maintenance Supervisor
Chris Wold, Operations Supervisor
Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: Andrew Moore, ATU 752
Bill W. Stone, ATU 752
Joan Fenton, Phoenix Towers
Jacqueline Jones, Anglers Manor
Shannon Fofar, Bloomington
John Corey, Bloomington
Jerry Purkey, Clare House
Stephanie Purkey, Clare House
Janet Shobe, CEFT
Charles M. Smith, CEFT
Marilyn J. Evans, CEFT

LeAnn M. Hibler, LMH Certified Reporting
Kim Tarkowski, Life CIL
Rickielee Benecke, Life CIL
Donna M. Toney, Bloomington
Regina Madison, Phoenix Towers
Orhan Brian Enata, ATU 752
David R. Calhoon, ATU 752
Byron Blotcky, Commerce Bank
Mick Ferrell, ATU 752
Jennifer Sicks, McLean County Regional Planning
Rachel Wells, Pantagraph
Haley BeMiller, WGLT
Zach Dietmeier, WJBC

Call to Order

Ms. Judy Buchanan, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Public Comments

No one in attendance wished to make a public comment. Chairman Buchanan thanked everyone for attending the Public Hearing just previous to this meeting and thanked those who attended our Listening Sessions and Open Houses over the previous months. Chairman Buchanan stated the route restructure has been a very instructive and productive process and she thanked everyone for their participation.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Mike McCurdy, and a second by Mr. John Bowman, the Board voted to approve the Board Minutes for June 25, 2013 as presented.

Items Removed From Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda

On a motion by Mr. Ryan Whitehouse, and a second by Mr. John Thomas, the Trustees voted to approve the consent agenda as presented including the following items:

- 1. Review and Approve July Disbursements**
- 2. Review and Approve June Financial Statements**
- 3. Review and Receive June Capital and Self-Insurance Reserve Fund Balances**
- 4. Review and Receive June Monthly Ridership Report**

Consent Agenda Discussion

Old Business

Mr. Andrew Johnson, General Manager, stated there is no old business.

New Business

1. Request for Approval of Proposed Connect Transit Route Restructuring

Mr. Johnson stated Connect Transit introduced a revised route restructure proposal at the Open House Phase and subsequently took concerns, questions, and input. A Public Notice was published to announce the Public Hearing and that brings us here today. Mr. Johnson explained there are three changes to the proposal that staff is going to recommend the Board take under advisement.

Mr. Johnson continued the community wishes to keep service on G.E. Road. Staff has concluded the request can be met, so the Board is requested to leave the Teal J service on G.E. Road.

Mr. Johnson stated staff has decided the Late Nite Green A service that was slated to be dropped should be left in place due to ridership. Staff is requesting the Trustees leave the Late Nite Green A service in place.

Mr. Johnson explained changes to the Blue E route are not planned at this time. The main reason is to allow study of the route that runs through the mobile home park. It has not yet been determined how buses will turn around there. The route will stay intact while it's examined further.

Mr. Johnson requested the Trustees approve the current proposal with these three changes.

Chairman Buchanan asked for questions from the Trustees.

Mr. McCurdy stated the process was highly inclusive. It was very open. Mr. McCurdy added he appreciated being able to meet many of the riders who came to the Open Houses. Mr. McCurdy said it was nice to participate in dialogue about Transit in general as well as the specific route changes. This was a great process and Mr. McCurdy stated he will vote to approve the route restructuring proposals based on the input we have received at the Open Houses and the Public Hearings. Mr. McCurdy added he would like to commend Transit and staff for the process.

Chairman Buchanan agreed with Mr. McCurdy. Chairman Buchanan stated that all the Transit Board members agree that Transit and staff should be commended. Chairman Buchanan stated the Trustees' job is to do what is best for our riders. This route restructuring is an effort to improve the system for the riders and the drivers. Many of the other improvements that have been mentioned are tied to revenue and that is something that the Board and staff continue to look at all the time. No one knows where additional funds will come from to allow Transit to do an even better job. The Trustees are having ongoing conversations with entities in the community and hopefully Transit will be able to make some of the improvements that you are asking about. The Trustees are embarking upon a strategic planning process soon, which will add to our vision of the future as well. Again, Chairman Buchanan thanked everyone for their participation and comments.

Mr. Whitehouse stated he reiterates what Mr. McCurdy said and he appreciates the staff and Board for their work and efforts on this process. Mr. Whitehouse asked staff to follow up and make sure the website is available for individuals with disabilities so they are able to read or see what the changes are and have access to the entire website. Mr. Whitehouse is certain staff will be sure to see that is done. Mr. Whitehouse suggested staff could talk with individuals about the driveways at Phoenix Towers and Woodhill Towers and see if Transit can get some shelters and look at possibilities in the future budget to see if some kind of assistance can be provided to individuals this change affects most. Mr. Whitehouse acknowledged standing outside is very uncomfortable. Mr. Whitehouse thanked the riders for bringing this issue to the Trustees' attention. Mr. Whitehouse stated the Board and staff really do pay attention to the riders' concerns.

Chairman Buchanan asked if there were any other comments or if anyone was ready to make a motion.

Mr. Bowman stated he appreciated the thought that went into this process. The fact that this proposal is a much more incremental approach than the previous route restructuring proposal makes the system more accessible to the people who have used it all along, which is obviously important. Mr. Bowman commended the staff for the work they did putting together the proposal. Mr. Bowman continued he wants to thank the drivers on all our buses as well. They are the folks who put those routes into context for the riders. Mr. Bowman sees that as he rides the buses on a regular basis in the community. Mr. Bowman said he appreciates our drivers and the work they do to help make the routes and any changes a little less complicated for the riders.

On a motion by Mr. Bowman, and a second by Mr. Thomas the Trustees voted to approve the route restructure proposal as presented.

Mr. Johnson added he would like to single out a few people who worked on this tirelessly. The lead architect of this revised proposal and all of our proposals is Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director. Mr. White received a great deal of assistance from Mr. Roy Rickert, Operations Director, and Mr. Chris Wold, Operations Assistant. Mr. Johnson continued how important it was that drivers participated in this restructure. In fact, in the 11th hour Union President, Mr. Mick Ferrell, was out with Mr. White to run proposed route modifications just to see if it would work. Mr. Johnson stated the process worked by getting all the input from the community, putting it into action, and testing it to see if would work. Mr. Johnson said we had to start somewhere and people weren't necessarily thrilled with where we started in the fall of 2012, but it got the conversation going. Mr. Johnson believes everyone learned a great deal from this entire process. Mr. Johnson stated going forward it is not necessarily going to be less controversial at times, but it is going to be much more inclusive and much more collaborative as we work together to figure out how to make this Transit System run the best for everyone involved. Mr. Johnson thanked the staff and the Board for supporting the proposal process. Mr. Johnson also thanked the community for being patient with the "rough start" at the beginning and staying involved and engaged. Mr. Johnson stated he sincerely hopes the public continues to be engaged with Transit to help make it the most efficient and effective service for everyone.

Mr. McCurdy inquired where the process goes next and when the restructuring is going to be in place.

Mr. Johnson responded the system has switched to a phased-in approach. The first proposal was very sweeping and included almost every route. He said routes not looked at before will be reviewed. At the same time, the system will undertake a study for bus stops, bus shelters, and transfer points to make them better, to provide more amenities, and determine the safest and most effective places for them. This will also be a collaborative effort with the community and employees. There is much to be done over the winter. Mr. Johnson stated no route changes will be implemented during the cold weather months. During that time staff will be working to come up with any and all proposals that can be enacted in the warm weather months. Mr. Johnson added other areas of Transit will be looked at very closely, stating the system will take a very realistic approach. He said that the magnitude change in 2014 will be determined. That would include Phase II of route restructuring. A Phase III and quite possibly a Phase IV could be necessary.

Mr. Johnson stated Connect Transit will keep talking to the community and we sincerely hope that everyone shows up to those Listening Sessions because that is where the conversation begins.

Mr. McCurdy inquired about the target start date for the route restructure that was just approved.

Mr. Johnson responded August 12th will be the implementation date.

Mr. Whitehouse asked when the public can expect to get new maps.

Mr. Johnson answered we should have new maps August 9th.

2. Resolution to Authorize Execution and Amendment of Downstate Operating Assistance Grant Agreement

Mr. Johnson explained every year the Transit receives operating assistance from the State of Illinois. Every year the Board must authorize execution of a grant contract with the state. Connect Transit puts in an application for a grant through the state every year following the approval of our budget. This year the state sent our grant contract very quickly. Mr. Johnson added we are fully funded for fiscal year 2014. This is a standard annual process. Mr. Johnson requested the Board authorize execution of fiscal year 2014 Downstate Operating Assistance Grant Agreement.

On a motion by Mr. Thomas, and a second by Ms. Felicia Shaw, the Board voted to approve the Resolution to Authorize Execution and Amendment of Downstate Operating Assistance Grant Agreement.

3. Request for Approval of Agreement with Amalgamated Transit Union Local 752 Covering New Unit Members in Dispatch and Administration

Mr. Johnson explained this is not the total collective bargaining agreement. In the beginning of 2013 the dispatch unit as well as several of administrative employees organized, as was their right to do. They organized with Amalgamated Transit Local 752 which represents operators and maintenance personnel. On March 15th that organization was certified with the state and then management entered into collective bargaining with union members. The process took several months and was very amicable. Mr. Johnson said the contract is fair for both sides. The contract doesn't change much for the employees. It does adjust wages for dispatch and administrative staff. It adopts many of the clauses in the other collective bargaining agreement. There are several items such as health insurance and sick time that remain as they were prior to being represented. This contract will terminate on January 2014. The reason for that early date is because management will enter into collective bargaining this fall on the entire contract, which terminates January 2014, for the total workforce represented by the union. This agreement will be combined with that contract as one going forward. Mr. Johnson asked the Board to approve this

agreement. Mr. Johnson added the contract was unanimously ratified by the union members.

On a motion by Mr. Thomas, and a second by Mr. Bowman, the Trustees voted to Approve the Agreement with Amalgamated Transit Union Local 752 Covering New Unit Members in Dispatch and Administration.

4. Request for Approval for Renewal of Employee Health Insurance

Mr. Johnson stated every year management is faced with increases for employee health insurance renewals. Last year the increase was 30% and through work with the broker and union the increase came down considerably. System employees have a high utilization of health insurance. This puts the system at a disadvantage in the market. This year the plan will increase the premium by 8.5%. In the grand scheme of things 8.5% is not a big increase. Mr. Johnson continued, at this point, it is not worthwhile to go back out into the market. The system is more than budgeted for this 8.5% increase. It is less than anticipated. Mr. Johnson stated the broker might be able to bring it down to 5% or 6% increase, but that is not a great deal of money saved for all the work and time required for the process. Mr. Johnson asked for the Trustees' approval on the Renewal of the current Employee Health Insurance with Health Alliance at an increase of 8.5%.

Mr. McCurdy inquired what are the factors required to have improved performance. Mr. Johnson responded that last year the Transit System was hit with several catastrophic illnesses. He said there is nothing you can do to predict that or to guard against it. Since then, there has been lower utilization, which helps improve performance. The system will work with all employees on wellness initiatives to help improve performance.

On a motion by Mr. McCurdy, and a second by Ms. Shaw, the Board voted to approve the Renewal of Employee Health Insurance.

General Manager's Report

1. Introduction of New Human Resources Director

Mr. Johnson introduced Ms. Jenifer Clark, the new Human Resources Director. Mr. Johnson stated Ms. Clark started last Friday and comes to Connect Transit from Xpac in East Peoria, which is a tier one supplier to Caterpillar. We are very excited to have her here.

2. Personnel Update

Mr. Johnson stated now that we have our Human Resources Director we will be jump starting the search for a new Maintenance Director. We also intend to start posting the new positions that were approved by the Board with the budget starting with the External Affairs Manager and Information Technology Manager. Those postings will be happening very soon and we hope to be filling those positions, which are critical to the functioning of this organization, as soon as possible with quality people.

3. Annual Financial Audit

Mr. Johnson explained every year Connect Transit has an independent financial audit. This year the audit will be conducted by the same firm as last year; Martin, Hood, Friese, and Associates. This is the last year on the contract with this firm. They will be here in August doing preliminary work, return in September for the audit, and will present the final report later in the fall. Mr. Johnson does not expect they will have a great deal of interaction with the Board, but he stated the Trustees should be aware the auditors may be contacting them in September.

4. Compressed Natural Gas Initiative

Mr. Johnson stated there is an initiative in Bloomington-Normal area to explore the potential of moving municipal fleets such as ours to compressed natural gas. Mr. Mike O'Grady of the Economic Development Council is spearheading the effort. Mr. Johnson said he is cautiously talking about the idea with Mr. O'Grady. It is a very expensive proposition, but one that will ultimately be required. California has already started the conversion to natural gas with municipal fleets. The writing is on the wall that it is just a matter of time and Illinois will be following suit. Conversion will take time, whether it is to electric or natural gas. Fleets of buses cannot be replaced overnight. We are exploring what the costs and the requirements are. Connect Transit would not be able to finance such a conversion on our own. This presents an opportunity for public/private partnership and we are willing to listen and see what might transpire.

Mr. Whitehouse inquired about a cost estimate for such a conversion. Mr. Johnson responded he believes it would run somewhere between \$60,000 and \$80,000 a bus for compressed natural gas. The main issue is the fueling station, which could run \$3 to \$4 million. Mr. Whitehouse asked if it is more of an economic or an environmentally friendly issue. Mr. Johnson replied it is a little of both. Probably initially it is more of a sustainability issue. It is not something where you will get a return on the investment for a very long time. The natural gas will ultimately be cheaper, but it will take a long time to offset the huge cost for the required infrastructure. There is also the problem that you can't work on a

natural gas bus in the same facility as a regular diesel bus. These buses would require a separate maintenance building. If there is the potential for private investment that makes sense for the public entity we would be willing to hear it and give it fair consideration. There is no economic way possible way for Connect Transit to do it all by ourselves.

Mr. McCurdy inquired if Mike O'Grady is fielding an offer or if there is something on the table they are looking at. Mr. Johnson responded it is in the very preliminary stages and primarily driven by Nicor right now. Mr. Johnson stated he has another meeting about this later in the month with the Economic Development Council. The plan is at a future meeting of the Board, Nicor and the EDC would make a presentation and present more details. The idea seems to be similar to what the Town of Normal has done with the electric vehicle charging stations. Bloomington-Normal is mid way between St. Louis and Chicago so we could be a refueling stop for over the road trucks. People are looking at where is the best place to start just to get the ball rolling and in the beginning quite possibly a public refueling station may be part of the design. That would come with another list of concerns and questions. Mr. Johnson explained starting out the Transit System may be the most logical place to begin. Transit will be replacing most of the current fleet in the next five years, so the timing could be perfect. That would be the optimum time to obtain grants and funding.

Mr. Thomas inquired if this would be an undertaking at the municipal level for fueling stations. Mr. Johnson responded they are looking for some entity that can take on and support an enterprise such as this and the Transit System is a logical option. We have almost 40 heavy duty buses, which fits the scale they are looking for. Mr. Johnson stated he is not sold on the idea yet, there are still many questions, and many things to take into account. Mr. Johnson continued he wants to be as progressive as possible and keep the Trustees up to date on the related discussions. Whether any of us are around in the next 10, 15, to 20 years when this happens, we don't want to be the last ones left holding the bag when diesel fuel is no longer available.

Mr. McCurdy inquired if this concept makes economic sense and responds to environmental issues as well. Mr. McCurdy is in favor of exploring this prospect if it makes sense on both counts. Mr. Johnson answered it responds to both economic and environment sustainability issues. Mr. McCurdy asked if it is possible to retro-fit an old bus. Mr. Johnson responded it is very difficult to retro-fit an old bus.

Mr. Bowman asked if any federal funds or grants would be available for this type of enterprise. Mr. Johnson stated he was under the impression the clean fuel funds were over and done, but lately he has heard there is some money still

available and evidentially there is going to be more clean fuel money becoming available soon.

5. Strategic Planning

Mr. Johnson has recently received a list of proposed dates from the strategic planning consultant. Mr. Johnson passed the list out to the Trustees and explained the dates are not concrete. The dates are a starting point, showing the progression, listing if staff or Board attendance is required, the topics that will be covered, and what will be accomplished. Mr. Johnson asked the Trustees to email or call him with their availability and any questions they may have. More information will be forthcoming once the dates are finalized.

6. Washington, D.C.

Mr. Johnson stated he was in Washington, D.C. last week attending the "Fly-In" with Congressman Aaron Schock. It was a very rewarding experience. It was an opportunity to hear from some very good speakers from the House, the Senate and around the world. There was opportunity to ask questions on a wide range of subjects including immigration, economics, and of course transportation. Congressman Rodney Davis was also there. Congressman Davis is on the Transportation Infrastructure Committee and he feels very confident that representatives are working on finding a funding source to keep the transportation program going beyond 2014 and strongly believes they will roll out a new transportation bill next year. Mr. Johnson added things can change in a heartbeat in Washington, but it is good to know discussions and hearings are happening and work is being done for transportation. Most importantly on that trip, a solid connection was made with our new Congressman.

Mr. McCurdy inquired about the motor fuel tax. Mr. Johnson responded the motor fuel tax is a short term solution to get transportation funding through the 2014 crisis. Motor fuel tax will not be able to support anything in the near future because with the improved vehicle fuel economy standards people are buying less fuel. No one has figured out how to do vehicle mile tax or something similar. Hopefully the pressing issues such as immigration will be solved soon and the representatives can focus on the infrastructure of the country.

Mr. Whitehouse commented politically the chances of a motor fuel tax increase are very unlikely.

Correspondence and Media

Chairman Buchanan commented there are several articles in the Board Packet covering the proposed changes in the routes. Chairman Buchanan pointed out one article from

the Pantagraph commending the Board for the holding the Listening Sessions, Open Houses, and organizing the Study Group “to make sure the system can provide the service the riders need”. Chairman Buchanan stated it is always good to have the media covering the changes and progress of Connect Transit.

Trustee Comments

Request for Executive Session to discuss Collective Bargaining Matters and review Minutes of Previous Executive Session

Chairman Buchanan stated there will be no discussion on collective bargaining matters as the agenda indicates. The Trustees will only be reviewing the minutes of a previous executive session during the executive session.

On a motion by Mr. Wilson, and a second by Mr. Bowman, the Trustees voted to adjourn the public session of the Board meeting at 5:30 p.m. and commence an Executive Session to review and discuss Minutes of Previous Executive Session.

Reconvene

On a motion by Mr. Thomas, and a second by Mr. Bowman, the Board voted to adjourn the Executive Session and reconvene the public session at 5:50 p.m.

Chairman Buchanan reconvened the public meeting and requested a motion on the minutes of the February 28, 2012 Executive Session.

On a motion by Mr. McCurdy, and a second by Ms. Shaw, the Trustees voted to approve the release of the minutes of the February 28, 2012 Executive Session.

Adjournment

There being no further public business, on a motion by Mr. McCurdy, and a second by Ms. Shaw, the Trustees voted to adjourn the public meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Mike McCurdy, Secretary



July 2013

Financial and Statistical Reports

Disbursements to be Approved
August 27, 2013

Payee	Goods Purchased	Amount
A.T.U. - C.O.P.E.	Payroll Deduction	\$196.32
ABC Bus Companies	Bus Parts	\$507.50
Ace-Hi Glass Co.	Glass	\$198.52
Ally	Car Lease	\$82.00
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 752	Payroll Deduction	\$5,170.65
Andrew Johnson	Car Allowance	\$500.00
Assurance Agency, Ltd.	Insurance	\$79,370.00
Belnick, Inc	Office Equipment	\$538.95
CDS Office Technologies	Office Supplies	\$53.01
Central Illinois Trucks Inc.	Bus Parts	\$75.57
Chicago CartoGraphics	New Maps/Rider Guides	\$1,300.00
City of Bloomington	Utilites	\$639.38
Clark Baird Smith	Legal Service	\$472.50
Comcast Cable	Internet	\$399.85
Comcast Spotlight	Commercial Advertising	\$2,000.00
Commerce Bank	Transfer from IL Funds to Commerce	\$224,037.00
Corn Belt Energy Corp.	Utilites	\$4,713.39
Cummins Mid-States Power Inc.	Bus Parts	\$2,500.00
David White	Expense Reimbursement	\$78.87
Dish Network	Television Service	\$108.00
Don Owen Tire Service, Inc.	Bus Parts	\$17.80
Ecolane USA, Inc.	Training	\$4,590.00
Engraving Express	Office Supplies	\$686.50
Evans Repair Shop	Outside Repair	\$1,257.19
Evergreen FS	Fuel	\$48,534.51
Express Services, Inc.	Temp Service	\$5,368.00
Fastenal Company	Bus Parts	\$6,261.86
Fleet-Net Corporation	Software & Tech Support	\$1,405.00
Four Seasons Association	Payroll Deduction	\$536.00
Frontier	Telephone	\$30.14
G&K Services	Mechanics Uniforms	\$666.40
Garber Heating & A/C	Building Maintenance	\$858.00
GE Capital C/O Ricoh USA Program	Copiers	\$431.00
Gillig LLC	Bus Parts	\$5,738.09
Health Alliance Medical Plans	Insurance	\$62,097.00
Heritage Machine & Welding, Inc.	Bus Parts	\$32.18
Husky Corporation	Fuel Station Parts	\$642.95
ICMA Retirement Trust - 457	Pension Plan	\$32,441.28
Idaho Child Support	Payroll Deduction	\$115.36
Illinois Cooperative Association	Mobile Radios	\$10,869.89
Illinois Department of Revenue	Payroll Deduction	\$16,058.95
Illinois State Disbursement Unit	Payroll Deduction	\$2,865.70

Illinois State University	1 Stop Shop Info Table	\$70.00
Interstate Batteries of Mid-Illinois	Bus Parts	\$1,043.70
IWIN	Employee Physicals	\$94.00
John H. Germeraad, Trustee	Payroll Deduction	\$960.00
Jonathon Teske	Tool Allowance	\$100.00
Kirby Risk Corporation	Building Supplies	\$25.80
LeAnn M. Hibler	Transcription Service	\$277.64
Lincoln National Life Insurance Co.	Insurance	\$2,842.07
Luminator	Bus Parts	\$35,563.66
MCS Office Technologies	Web Site	\$35.00
Michelin North America, Inc	Tires	\$1,502.41
Midwest Aerials & Equipment, Inc.	Forklift Rental	\$1,122.00
Miller Janitor Supply	Maintenance Supplies	\$353.55
Motion Industries, Inc.	Bus Parts	\$600.49
Mutual of Omaha	Insurance	\$3,674.59
Napa Auto Parts	Bus Parts	\$135.00
Network Tool Warehouse	Shop Tools	\$243.47
New Flyer Industries Canada UIC	Bus Parts	\$34.98
NMHG Financial Services	Garage Maint Equipment	\$813.63
Oberlander Alarm Systems, Inc.	Security Alarm Service Fee	\$191.00
Office Collection Section-IDOR	P/R Taxes	\$465.21
Payroll - Net		\$244,212.36
Pemco Service Company Inc.	Shop Tools	\$1,141.92
Petty Cash	Reimbursement	\$26.06
Powder Coating Unlimited	Powder Coat Bus Wheels	\$1,300.00
Professional Binding Products, Inc	Laminator Supplies	\$492.95
Ricoh USA, INC	Copier	\$163.32
Safelite Auto Glass	Windshield Repair	\$78.93
Southtown Wrecker Service, Inc.,	Bus Towing	\$315.00
TeVoert Auto Electric, Inc.	Bus Parts	\$192.40
The Copy Shop	Printing	\$131.85
The Encompass Gas Group, Inc	Welding Supplies	\$151.72
Think Graphic Design	Bus Stop Sign Design	\$410.84
Town of Normal	Utilites	\$9.20
Trish Tilton	Office Supplies	\$102.25
U.S. Postal Service	Office Supplies	\$138.00
United Parcel Service	Shipping	\$1.94
University Directories	Advertising	\$850.00
Verizon Wireless	Mobile Data Terminals for SS	\$740.38
VISA	Dues	\$49.00
VISA	Office Supplies	\$307.01
VISA	Travel & Meetings	\$1,807.21
VSP Of Illinois	Insurance	\$527.44
WGLT	Radio Advertising	\$750.00
Winkle Environmental Service		\$85.00
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Total Operating		\$828,381.97

Capital Account

Goranson Consulting, Inc	Strategic Planning	\$500.00
Stevens West, Inc	Shipping	<u>\$23,000.00</u>
Total Capital		<u>\$23,500.00</u>
Grand Total		<u><u>\$851,881.97</u></u>

Bloomington Normal Public Transit Balance Sheet

Fiscal Year: 2014 Period 1 July - 2013

Division: 99 Board Reports

As of: 07/31/2013

Assets

Current Assets

Checking and Savings	\$4,289,803.77
Accounts Receivable	\$3,770,449.05
Inventory Asset - Fuel	\$33,091.49
Inventory Asset - Parts	\$145,098.89
Inventory Asset - Tires	\$0.00
Other Current Assets	\$171,203.10

Total Current Assets \$8,409,646.30

Fixed Assets \$14,844,257.73

Total Assets \$23,253,904.03

Liabilities & Equity

Liabilities

Accounts Payable	\$244,394.99
Payroll Liabilities	\$463,117.34
Contracts	\$3,895.88
Due to Illinois Funds Account	\$2,419,609.45
Deferred Revenue	\$100,207.46
Deficit Funding Advance	\$0.00

Total Liabilities \$3,231,225.12

EQUITY

Fixed Asset Equity	\$12,483,532.77
Unreserved Fund Equity	\$6,750,412.62
Underground Petroleum Storage	\$20,000.00

Total Equity \$19,253,945.39

Retained Earnings \$768,733.52

Total Liabilities & Equity \$23,253,904.03

Bloomington Normal Public Transit

Income Statement With Approved Budget

Fiscal Year: 2014	Period 1	Division: 98 Operating Profit/Loss	As of: 07/31/2013		
			Jul-2013 Thru Jul-2013	Year To Date	Approved Budget
			July - 2013		
Operating Revenue					
Passenger Fares	\$71,966.91	9.70%	\$71,966.91	9.70%	\$742,300.00
ISU Contract Fare	\$39,701.20	8.33%	\$39,701.20	8.33%	\$476,415.00
Other Contract Fares	\$9,945.79	6.63%	\$9,945.79	6.63%	\$150,000.00
Advertising Revenue	\$0.00	0.00%	\$0.00	0.00%	\$15,000.00
Miscellaneous Revenue	\$412.25	20.61%	\$412.25	20.61%	\$2,000.00
Total Operating Revenue	\$122,026.15	8.81%	\$122,026.15	8.81%	\$1,385,715.00
Operating Expenses					
Operators Wages	\$213,250.06	5.16%	\$213,250.06	5.16%	\$4,130,570.00
Maintenance Wages	\$39,245.53	4.47%	\$39,245.53	4.47%	\$877,297.00
Administrtion Wages	\$24,148.90	3.44%	\$24,148.90	3.44%	\$701,655.00
Employer Payroll Tax Expense	\$20,949.90	4.49%	\$20,949.90	4.49%	\$466,778.00
Retirement Plan	\$14,057.51	5.62%	\$14,057.51	5.62%	\$250,000.00
Group Insurance	\$64,156.00	7.16%	\$64,156.00	7.16%	\$896,002.00
Uniform Expense	\$400.76	2.59%	\$400.76	2.59%	\$15,500.00
Professional Services	\$2,572.50	2.71%	\$2,572.50	2.71%	\$94,800.00
Outside Repair-Labor	\$8,099.08	10.33%	\$8,099.08	10.33%	\$78,400.00
Contract Maintenance Services	\$7,457.74	7.77%	\$7,457.74	7.77%	\$96,000.00
Custodial Services	\$434.15	6.78%	\$434.15	6.78%	\$6,400.00
Employee Recruiting/Testing/Temp Help	\$7,521.20	28.71%	\$7,521.20	28.71%	\$26,200.00
Fuel	\$100,634.84	8.36%	\$100,634.84	8.36%	\$1,203,420.00
Lubricants	\$888.36	3.86%	\$888.36	3.86%	\$23,000.00
Tires	\$2,809.24	3.46%	\$2,809.24	3.46%	\$81,100.00
Bus Repair Parts	\$43,919.26	36.60%	\$43,919.26	36.60%	\$120,000.00
Other Materials & Supplies	\$9,325.04	30.57%	\$9,325.04	30.57%	\$30,500.00
Shelters/Signs/Shop Tools	\$1,618.62	4.37%	\$1,618.62	4.37%	\$37,000.00
Computer and Office Supplies	\$6,786.73	4.97%	\$6,786.73	4.97%	\$136,500.00
Utilities	\$6,831.86	5.44%	\$6,831.86	5.44%	\$125,500.00
Corporate Insurance	\$16,780.19	9.20%	\$16,780.19	9.20%	\$182,378.00
Dues/Subscriptions/Fees	\$249.00	0.89%	\$249.00	0.89%	\$28,000.00
Printing/Marketing/Training	\$12,356.39	5.08%	\$12,356.39	5.08%	\$243,000.00
Total Operating Expenses	\$604,492.86	6.14%	\$604,492.86	6.14%	\$9,850,000.00
Operating Assistance					
Operating Deficit	(\$482,466.71)	5.70%	(\$482,466.71)	5.70%	(\$8,454,285.00)
Illinois Downstate Operating Assistance	\$392,274.95	6.14%	\$392,274.95	6.14%	\$6,388,250.00
FTA 5307 Operating Assistance	\$89,608.00	4.31%	\$89,608.00	4.31%	\$2,078,035.00
Total Operating Assistance	\$481,882.95	5.69%	\$481,882.95	5.69%	\$8,464,285.00

Connect Transit
Local Capital and Self-Insurance Fund Balance
July 2013

<u>Self-Insurance Fund:</u>	<u>The Illinois Funds- Cash Balance</u>	
07/01/13	Beginning Balance	\$ 106,828.82
07/31/13	Additions - Interest Income	<u>\$ 1.31</u>
07/31/13	Ending Balance	<u>\$ 106,830.13</u>

<u>Local Capital Reserve:</u>	<u>The Illinois Funds- Cash Balance</u>	
07/01/13	Beginning Balance	\$ 2,086.56
07/31/13	Additions - Interest Income	<u>\$ 0.02</u>
07/31/13	Ending Balance	<u>\$ 2,086.58</u>

<u>Local Capital</u>	<u>Commerce Bank - Cash Balance</u>	
07/01/13	Beginning Balance	\$ 2,893,696.59
07/05/13	Bennett Drive Away	\$ (4,500.00)
07/26/13	Deposit - Normal	\$ 30,848.66
07/30/13	Goranson Consulting, Inc.	\$ (500.00)
07/31/13	Additions - Interest Income	<u>\$ 392.47</u>
07/31/13	Ending Balance	<u>\$ 2,919,937.72</u>

<u>FTA & IDOT Capital</u>	<u>The Illinois Funds- Cash Balance</u>	
07/01/13	Beginning Balance	\$ 43,590.98
07/31/13	Additions - Interest Income	<u>\$ 0.53</u>
07/31/13	Ending Balance	<u>\$ 43,591.51</u>

Total Reserve Capital Account \$ 2,965,615.81

Breakdown of the Local Capital Reserve Fund- Cash Balance:

Local Capital #1	Local Capital #2
<u>\$ 43,591.51</u>	<u>\$ 2,922,024.30</u>

Breakdown of Local Funding in Local Capital #2 (Earmarked Funds):

	<u>FY14 Received</u>	<u>FY143 Receivable</u>
	<u>7/31/2013</u>	<u>7/31/2013</u>
Bloomington	\$ 45,053.01	\$ 45,053.01
Normal	\$ 30,848.66	\$ -
Total YTD	<u>\$ 75,901.67</u>	<u>\$ 45,053.01</u>

Local Capital Reserve Fund Balance - Account Value

07/31/13	Cash Balance	\$ 2,965,615.81
07/31/13	Loans to Operating	\$ 2,419,609.45
07/31/13	Reserve fund for underground storage tank (Cap. I)	\$ (40,000.00)
07/31/13	Ending Balance	<u>\$ 5,345,225.26</u>
Local Capital #1	Local Capital #2	
<u>\$ 3,591.51</u>	<u>\$ 5,341,633.75</u>	



Statistics	July 2013					July 2012					% Change				
	Customers	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours	Boardings per Revenue Hour		Customers	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours	Boardings per Revenue Hour		Customers	Revenue Miles	Revenue Hours	Boardings per Revenue Hour	
Connect Transit															
Green A (2 buses)	21,686	9,902	739	29.36		23,772	9,792	741	32.10		-8.8%	1.1%	-0.3%	-8.5%	
Red B (2 buses)	15,164	9,618	758	19.99		14,979	9,245	755	19.85		1.2%	4.0%	0.5%	0.7%	
Purple C (2 buses)	12,880	9,826	753	17.10		13,754	9,445	758	18.15		-6.4%	4.0%	-0.6%	-5.8%	
Pink D (1 bus)	5,886	4,674	356	16.53		5,287	4,493	359	14.72		11.3%	4.0%	-0.9%	12.6%	
Blue E (1 bus)	5,221	5,458	389	13.43		4,933	5,229	387	12.76		5.8%	4.0%	0.6%	5.2%	
Brown F (2 buses)	9,075	10,656	786	11.55		9,216	10,242	786	11.73		-1.5%	4.0%	0.0%	-1.5%	
Orange H (2 buses)	15,810	10,420	774	20.42		16,304	10,916	774	21.85		-6.5%	4.0%	0.1%	-6.6%	
Yellow G (2 buses)	14,848	10,418	771	19.25		15,068	10,009	775	19.43		-1.5%	4.1%	-0.5%	-0.9%	
Orange H (2 buses)	18,365	12,844	753	24.38		17,682	12,625	755	23.43		3.9%	1.7%	-0.2%	4.1%	
Lime I (2 buses)	2,365	9,552	380	6.23		2,179	9,350	390	5.59		8.5%	2.2%	-2.6%	11.5%	
Teal J (1 bus)	8,005	6,204	388	20.61		7,450	5,964	386	19.33		7.4%	4.0%	0.7%	6.7%	
Aqua K (1 bus)	-	-	-	#DIV/0!		-	-	-	#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
NCWHS Tipper (1 bus)	-	-	-	#DIV/0!		-	-	-	#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
ISU Tri Towers (2 buses)	-	-	-	#DIV/0!		-	-	-	#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
ISU College Station (2 buses)	-	-	-	#DIV/0!		-	-	-	#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
Nite Ride (3 buses)	-	-	-	#DIV/0!		-	-	-	#DIV/0!		#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!	
Total Fixed Route	129,305	99,552	6,847	18.88		131,224	96,410	6,863	19.12		-1.5%	3.3%	-0.2%	-1.2%	
Demand Response															
Connect Mobility	4,459	29,219	1,150	3.88		3,590	18,953	1,314	2.72		24.6%	22.5%	-12.5%	42.3%	
Connect Late Night	561	2,920	245	2.29		582	2,342	302	1.93		-3.6%	24.7%	-18.8%	18.8%	
Total Demand Response	5,020	26,139	1,395	3.60		4,162	21,295	1,616	2.58		20.6%	22.7%	-13.7%	39.7%	
SYSTEM TOTALS	134,325	125,691	8,242	16.30		135,386	117,705	8,479	15.97		-0.8%	6.8%	-2.8%	2.1%	



		Month: July 2013			
		Target	FY2014	FY2013	% Change
Effectiveness	Total Boardings per Revenue Hour	15.0	16.3	16.0	2.1%
	Total Boardings per Capita	1.0	1.0	1.0	-0.8%
	Total Boardings per Revenue Mile	1.0	1.1	1.2	-7.1%
Safety	Total Preventable Accidents (Fixed Route and Demand Response)	0.0	1	2	-50.0%
	Preventable Accidents per 100,000 Miles	0.0	1	2	-46.6%
Efficiency	Farebox Recovery Ratio	13.3%	20.1%	14.6%	37.7%
	Average Fare	\$ 0.68	\$ 0.91	\$ 0.63	44.2%
	Cost per Revenue Hour	\$ 74.22	\$ 73.34	\$ 68.59	6.9%
	Cost per Customer	\$ 5.10	\$ 4.50	\$ 4.30	4.8%
	Operating Assistance Investment per Customer	\$ 4.42	\$ 3.59	\$ 3.67	-2.0%
	Total Customers		134,325	135,386	-0.8%
Base Statistics for Calculations	Total Revenue Hours		8,242	8,479	-2.8%
	Total Revenue Miles		125,691	117,705	6.8%
	Total Bloomington-Normal Population (per the 2010 US Census)		129,107	129,107	0.0%
	Total Operating Expense		\$ 604,493.00	\$ 581,628.00	3.9%
	Total Operating Revenue (includes all directly-generated revenue such as Universal Access)		\$ 121,614.00	\$ 84,992.00	43.1%

Analysis & Interpretation

CONNECT TRANSIT
Minutes of PUBLIC HEARING
Connect Transit Board Room, 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL
Revised Route Restructure
Public Hearing for Service Changes Effective August 2013

Public Hearing #1

Date: Thursday, July 25, 2013
Time: 5:30 pm
Location: Connect Transit Board Room
351 Wylie Drive
Normal, IL 61761

Public Attendees:

Charles Smith, CEFT
Janet Shobe, CEFT
Vincent Radcliffe, CEFT
Marilyn J. Evans, CEFT
Glenda Perry, Bloomington
Wallace Tudor, Bloomington
Rose McGlothlin, Bloomington
Larry Radcliffe, Normal
Teresa Radcliffe, Normal
Lee Tewell, Bloomington

Board Members Present:

Judy Buchanan, Chairman
Ryan Whitehouse
Bill Wilson

Staff Present:

Andrew Johnson, General Manager
Roy Rickert, Operations Director
Dave White, Safety & Training Director
Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director
Chris Wold, Operations Assistant
Ami Armitage, Executive Assistant
Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant

Introduction

Mr. Andrew Johnson, Connect Transit General Manager, welcomed everyone to the first Public Hearing for the Revised Proposal for Connect Transit Route Restructuring. Mr. Johnson introduced the Board Members present: Ms. Judy Buchanan, Chairman, Mr. Bill Wilson, and Mr. Ryan Whitehouse. Mr. Johnson introduced the staff present: Mr. Roy Rickert, Operations Director, Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director, Mr. Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director, and Mr. Chris Wold, Operations Assistant.

Mr. Johnson explained the Route Restructure process began in the fall of 2012 with a proposal for major route changes. At the Public Hearings the staff listened to the community and realized the proposed changes were too much, too quick. Over the winter, the proposal was re-examined and the changes were re-evaluated. It was decided to do a "Phased-In" approach. The revisions made some impactful changes but did not make the changes as wide spread and as wide scale as the original proposal. Three Listening Sessions were held at the beginning of the year. Connect Transit hosted three Open Houses this past spring to introduce the revised plan and to give the public ample opportunity to ask questions, voice concerns, and opinions. The public input was greatly appreciated. The active engagement of the community is helping to get the restructure service tailored to what the people need. The resulting Revised Route Restructure Phase I is what brings us to this Public Hearing.

Mr. Johnson stated the Listening Sessions and the Open Houses were the opportunities for open dialogue. The Public Hearing is the opportunity for the Board and Connect Transit to receive final comments from the public on this Phase I Revised Route Restructure Proposal. The Trustees and staff will be listening and will make clarifications if necessary. There will not be open dialogue. Mr. Johnson stressed the public is free to contact staff anytime to ask questions, get clarifications, express a concern, or to state what you are thinking about Connect Transit. That is encouraged whole heartily.

Mr. Johnson explained the initial Phase I Revised Route Restructure Proposal raised some concerns. Staff has re-examined the data, spoken with members of the community, and we are going to advise the Board to make some changes to that Proposal, which was published in the Public Notice. Before we start the Public Hearing, Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director, will explain the changes on the initial Phase I Proposal we plan to recommend to the Board. Mr. Johnson stated we wish for everyone to be aware of the changes and what is intended to take place in August provided this proposal is approved by the Board of Trustees.

Mr. White stated he would begin to explain the biggest change, which is with the Teal J Route. Mr. White reported he received many comments regarding the ridership on GE Road. In response to those comments the route was amended. The Teal J will depart Eastland Mall on Fairway Drive to Eastland Drive, will take Hershey Road to GE Road, travel down GE Road to Leslie and resume a route that is very similar to what it runs now, which is Leslie to Pamela, Ekstam out to and around CIRA Drive, to Empire, back to Hershey Road and Fairway Drive into Eastland Mall. This will provide service to the Airport and to those riders employed on GE Road. Mr. White stated staff looked at ridership data, talked with drivers, rode the route, and watched bus videos when considering all route changes.

One other item mentioned in the Public Hearing Notice was the discontinuation of the late Night Shuttle Bus that runs between Uptown Normal and Downtown Bloomington. This route will stay in service and continue as it is now. It is basically a late night extension of the Green A bus route on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights.

Mr. White continued the proposed changes to the Blue E route have been eliminated. There will be no changes made to the Blue E route at this time. The Blue E route will run as it is now.

Mr. Larry Radcliffe, Blue E route rider, introduced himself and read a statement concerning the changes proposed for that route. Mr. Radcliffe stated ten years ago he became disabled from a traumatic brain injury and will never be able to drive again. He was also paralyzed on the right side of his body and has very limited mobility on that side. He catches the bus on Henry Street and does not understand why Connect Transit will be changing from Henry Street to Towanda Avenue, which only has houses on the west side of the street and farmland on the east side. Henry Street has homes on both sides of the street; therefore it has the potential of more riders. Mr. Radcliffe continued he rides the bus for his monthly blood work, among other activities and errands. Mr. Radcliffe concluded he is not the only one who catches the bus on Henry Street. This change would create a huge inconvenience for him to catch the bus elsewhere.

Mr. White assured Mr. Radcliffe there will be no changes made to the Blue E route at this time. Mr. Radcliffe was very happy and grateful to hear this news.

Mr. White concluded stating all the other changes are the same proposals that were made in May.

Mr. Johnson asked if anyone had any questions about the updated information Mr. White just explained.

Mr. Wallace Tudor, Rider, stated he noticed when the transfer center was changed in Uptown Normal to Uptown Station that the shelters are still standing in front of Watterson Towers and they are full of all kinds of signage, including outdated bus schedules. Some of the route information signs are placed too high making it very difficult to read for the average person and if a wheelchair bound person needs to read it they might as well forget it. Mr. Tudor inquired if the information would be updated and if the schedules could be posted at the Downtown Bloomington transfer center shelters. Mr. Tudor said everyday he sees riders getting on the bus asking the driver where the bus is going. The signs are outdated, faded, and too high to read. Mr. Tudor asked if new route maps will be available. Mr. Tudor added the map on the website is outdated as well. Mr. Tudor inquired if anything will be printed to inform the public of the changes that are being made. Currently, there is no information for the riders about these new changes. Nothing has been posted anywhere in Bloomington explaining these changes.

Mr. Johnson responded every route map on the website should be absolutely up to date. You should not be getting the old maps any longer. Mr. Tudor stated when he prints the maps from the website it is the same as the map he printed three years ago. Mr. Tudor said the DoubleMap is updated, but not the route maps on the website. Mr. Johnson added Connect Transit is looking at bus stops and shelters. It is a project that will begin very soon and we will go through all the existing shelters and remove outdated materials. The shelters outside of Watterson Towers at ISU are the property of ISU and we are working with ISU to repurpose some of those shelters. Mr. Tudor stated he was actually surprised to see the routes posted on the shelters in Normal, because he has never seen anything posted in the Bloomington shelters. Mr. Tudor continued all the riders asking the drivers questions about the routes and where the bus is going slows the driver down and makes the route run late. Mr. Tudor requested that Connect Transit please update the route notices at the stops.

Mr. Johnson announced the start of the Public Hearing and requested those wishing to make comments regarding the revised route proposal to please state their name before making their comment.

Mr. Charles Michael Smith introduced himself and stated he lives in Normal. Mr. Smith said he is the Chairman for the Committee to Ensure Fair Transit. Mr. Smith read a statement dated July 19, 2013. He read aloud. "CEFT (Committee to Ensure Fair

Transit) after careful study and discussion has voted to unanimously support Part A of Connect Transit's current route change plan. We would like to commend Connect Transit for its willingness to listen to members of the community and work with them to build a better Transit System. We have two reservations: 1) the exclusion of going into certain drives, such as Phoenix Towers and Woodhill. While we understand the technical reasons for this, we would still like to express our concerns for the residents of those facilities and hope that Connect Transit will find a way to accommodate them in the future. 2) The exclusion of going through Market Square by the Lime I bus may affect a percentage of the population that uses the facilities."

Mr. Smith stated he feels the Transit has come a long way with the route restructure process and has learned a lot, and learned to interact with the community. When this process began last fall there was a huge disconnection between Transit and the community. Mr. Smith now feels much of that is no longer true. Mr. Smith still thinks there will be times that CEFT will be needed to give the outside opinion and we are certainly not closing up shop. Mr. Smith commended Transit for its efforts to work with the community, especially seeing the examples of the most recent route adjustments since the last Open House. Mr. Smith thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Lee Tewell introduced himself stating he lives in Bloomington. Mr. Tewell stated he has been working with the Transit to ensure he still has access to the Teal J route. Mr. Tewell lives on the Teal J route and he cannot express enough how relieved he was to learn the Transit was able incorporate GE Road back into that route. When Mr. Tewell moved to his home last August one of the main attractions of the home was that it was on a bus route. The house location was also the shortest distance for him to walk to get to a route that he could find in the current system. Mr. Tewell stated having a route within his restricted ability to navigate, allows him to remain as independent as possible. Mr. Tewell continued he would like to work with Transit staff to regulate the timing of the routes so he can make connections with other bus routes under the newly proposed changes. Mr. Tewell thanked the staff for taking the time to listen to his concerns.

Mr. Johnson thanked Mr. Smith and Mr. Tewell for their comments and asked if anyone else wished to speak. Hearing no one, Mr. Johnson stated this would conclude the Public Hearing. Mr. Johnson stated he appreciated everyone for coming and added everyone should feel free to come to staff with any concerns, suggestions, or questions. The staff is there to attend to your needs.

Ms. Janet Shobe introduced herself and inquired as to when these route changes would go into effect and exactly when will the public be able to get a map showing the new routes.

Mr. Johnson responded the plan is for the new route changes to begin August 12th and the new route maps should be available a few days before that date.

Ms. Shobe inquired if the Heartland bus will be called Heartland or Green A and what will the start date be for that route.

Mr. Roy Rickert, Operations Director, responded it will be called the Heartland Express and will begin running the following week, August 19th.

Ms. Shobe thanked everyone for the information.

Ms. Marilyn Evans inquired if the new maps will be available on the Special Service buses, because currently there are no maps on those buses. The Special Service riders could take and study a map to see if any of the fixed routes might be another option for them, but there are none on the SS buses.

Mr. Johnson was not aware the Mobility buses did not have maps and brochures on them. There should be and Mr. Chris Wold, Operations Supervisor, will be sure that is taken care of.

Mr. Johnson asked if there were any other questions or comments. Hearing none, Mr. Johnson thanked everyone for coming to the Public Hearing and concluded the Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m.

CONNECT TRANSIT
Minutes of PUBLIC HEARING
BLOOMINGTON CITY HALL, COUNCIL CHAMBERS
Revised Route Restructure
Public Hearing for Service Changes Effective August 2013

Public Hearing #2

Date: Thursday, July 30, 2013
Time: 4:30 pm
Location: Bloomington City Hall, Council Chambers
109 East Olive Street
Bloomington, IL 61701

Public Present

Janet Trotter, Lincoln Towers
Sherri Priese, Bloomington
Gwen Burns, Bloomington
Andrew Moore, ATU 752
Bill Stone, ATU 752
Jennifer Sicks, Regional Planning
Joan Fenton, Phoenix Towers
Jacqueline Jones, Anglers Manor
Shannon Fofar, Bloomington
John Corey, State Farm
Orhan Brian Enata, ATU 752
Haley Bemiller, ISU WGLT
Byron Blotcky, Commerce Bank
Barry Mogk, Bloomington
Haley BeMiller, WGLT

Jerry Purkey, Clare House
Stephanie Purkey, Clare House
Julie E. North, ISU
Mary Jo Kocar, ISU
Janet M. Shobe, CEFT
Charles M. Smith, CEFT
Marilyn J. Evans, CEFT
Kim Tarkowski, Life CIL
Donna M. Toney, Bloomington
Regina Madison, Phoenix Towers
David R. Calhoon, ATU 752
Rickielee Benecke, Life CIL
Mick Ferrell, ATU 758
Rachel Wells, Pantagraph
Zach Dietmeier, WJBC

Board Members Present

Judy Buchanan, Chairman
Mike McCurdy, Secretary
John Thomas
Ryan Whitehouse
John Bowman
Felicia Shaw
David Hales, Ex-Officio Member

Transit Staff Present

Andrew Johnson, General Manager
Tom Crouch, Maintenance Supervisor
Pat Keubrich, Finance Director
Ami Armitage, Executive Assistant
Jenifer Clark, Human Resource Director
Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director
Chris Wold, Operations Assistant
Roy Rickert, Operations Director
Dave White, Safety and Training Director
Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant

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>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Okay. I appreciate everybody coming today for the Public Hearing on Connect Transit route restructuring.

Many of you are familiar faces and probably well acquainted with the changes that we have proposed.

I will tell you right off the bat we are as the Connect Transit staff making the recommendation in addition to what was published in the Public Hearing notice, we are making the recommendation to keep public Transit on GE road on the Teal J route. We're not making any changes to the Blue E at this point.

Also we are recommending that the Late Night Green A service be left intact.

So if anybody had any questions on that or were worried about those particular changes prior to us recommending these, rest assured those pieces of service will stay in place.

Now, just some housekeeping, we have had quite a long journey to get to this point, starting late last year where we brought out a route proposal that was the basis for getting the conversation started in our community. We had a lot of conversation on it. That prompted us to dial it back and revise what we had out there. This revised proposal is not as sweeping a change as what we had initially proposed.

We had numerous Listening Sessions. We had Open Houses that explained what we were planning on doing.

We had a lot of dialogue back and forth with the community, answering questions, taking concerns, and I think that's really been a process that's worked. Even at the Open House level where we had devised what the proposal was going to be, we still got feedback that prompted us to make some additional changes on top of that.

Right now we are in the Public Hearing phase, and just to clarify what that is, we are no longer in the dialogue phase, so what we want to hear now are comments from the public related to the route restructuring proposal. If we need to make a clarification just a point of order, we will, other than that we're not here as staff to answer questions or to debate the merits of the proposal.

That is what we were doing in the Listening Sessions and Open Houses.

So what we expect is those who wish to speak can do one of two things. You can come up to the podium and talk into the mic. If you are able. If you are not able to do that, don't think we have a -- I don't think we have a wireless mic, but we will sure our recorder is close by so you can be heard.

I would appreciate it if you give us your name and where you are from, just Normal or Bloomington. And other than that, I would like --

>> CITY HALL STAFF MEMBER: We're just going to shut these doors for a minute so if you can give us a few seconds.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: While we do that I will do introductions starting with Board Members in attendance. We have Ryan Whitehouse, Judy Buchanan, Mike McCurdy, John Thomas, and John Bowman.

Back there is ex-officio member David Hales.

I don't think I missed anybody. We have a number of staff members, Ami Armitage in the back, Jennifer Clark,

Chris Wold, Tom Crouch, Pat Kuebrich and Isaac Thorne.

With that I invite anybody and everybody to make their way up and enter a public comment for our route restructuring.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: I can't get up but have I a question. I would like to know what the bus drivers think about all these new changes.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Ma'am, once again we're not answering questions in this particular venue.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Does that mean that no matter what is said or done in here, it is already a set schedule and the new route will be -- the new routes will all be the new routes?

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Absolutely not. What we're hearing is public comment on the route changes. We have been discussing these route changes for months and months and months.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Right.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: We have discussed them with the drivers. And pretty much anyone else who wanted to discuss them.

It is up to our Board to vote on them, and it will be taking up that vote in the meeting following this.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Is that meeting going to be a public meeting?

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: It will be right here.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Okay.

>> REGINA MADISON: Are you saying -- okay, you are not going to answer questions but we can make statements?

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Correct. This is your time to make a statement.

>> REGINA MADISON: Okay. My name is Regina Madison, with the changes that are going on -- I live in Phoenix Towers. So it was a very big concern to find out that the buses would not come out there anymore. We have to come up to the street which doesn't seem big. For some people it is, though, because some of us have trouble walking. Some of us have trouble going up and down inclines.

One of the bigger things is, at this point we don't have a shelter that's going to be put up there at the street to protect the elderly and the disabled from the scorching heat or the very extreme cold temperatures and things like that.

I don't know what to do to see if we can even get a shelter up there. I don't know the procedures. I don't know what Phoenix Towers may or may not need to be.

But that's my biggest concern with the Purple C route.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you for your comments. I will tell you we are talking to Phoenix Towers management about that.

>> REGINA MADISON: Thank you.

>> JOAN FENTON: Yes, I would like to reiterate what this lady has said. And could you clarify for us several of us have heard, we thought from a good person who knew what they were talking about, that the Purple C was going to come down just for now, and we would like a clarification on that so we could know, is it August 1st that this --

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: It will be August 12th if it passes today.

>> JOAN FENTON: Okay. If you could give us a clarification on that what we've heard.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: I'm sorry. The clarification is on?

>> MICK FERRELL: Whether the bus is coming to Phoenix Towers or not, sir.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: The bus at this point as of August 12th will not be going into the driveway.

Yes, Ma'am?

>> REGINA MADISON: I have another concern about with that Lime I no longer going into Market Square, and I understand that to make the route run smoother, that it is very difficult to have the bus stopping at every corner. I know when years and years ago it was a much smaller city and it was able to do that.

But I do have concern about the elderly and disabled being able to walk those extra blocks that we may have to because of the set bus stop routes that you are going to have.

>> JOAN FENTON: Yes, one lady has asked, who do we contact about this very real problem that those of us who live at Phoenix Towers. Not just our manager, but do we need to go to who owns the place? Is that our correct way to handle this problem?

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: I think that's a conversation you and I can have offline after this meeting.

Is there anybody else who wishes to make a

statement?

Yes, Ma'am?

>> JACQUELINE JONES: My name is Jacqueline Jones I live at Anglers Manor. I moved there almost 3 years ago after my husband passed because it was more reasonable as far as rent wise goes and I like the bus route.

It is my understanding that now that we have to go up the street also, and that is a huge concern of mine because we have several ladies that take that bus route, they are in walkers, or they are in their 80s, or some early 90s, and that's going to be very difficult in the winter for them to go up there. And we have benches out there, yes, but we have no shelter.

One of my main concerns is to my understanding that we will catch the Teal J to go there, from there to the mall, and then on our way back we catch Purple C.

That's going to be very confusing to some of the elderly. I would hopefully say that I hope you keep that purposely the way -- Purple C the way it is.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Thank you for your comments.

>> SHERRI PRIESE: Sir, sit down.

>> TRISH TILTON: Barry, thank you.

>> BARRY MOGK: Sorry.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Are there any other individuals who have any comments?

Hearing none, then I believe -- oh, we have one. Charles?

>> CHARLES SMITH: Hi. My name is Charles Smith. I'm from Normal Illinois.

Now before I read our statement, the Committee to Ensure Fair Transit is a group that has at times opposed many of the changes that were originally proposed in the first proposal.

And we have had our time with the Transit System. However, for those of you, and this is for the record because we gave public support. We have attended nearly every Board Meeting, we have attended nearly every Listening Session, and we have attended the Open Houses. So they were available to the public to give their opinions and things and I do believe that they made a good faith effort to publicize these.

Having said that, I will paraphrase a statement which I made in our last Public Hearing. After a long consideration and study on the current bus routes, the

Committee to Ensure Fair Transit has voted to support them. We do recognize that the Transit System has gone a long way to work with the community.

Having said that, we do have a couple reservations and concerns and those are, one, not going through places such as Phoenix Towers and Wood Hill and other places, and we are hoping that through dialogue and work that the Transit System can work to accommodate the residents of those facilities to ensure their safety and ease of travel on the bus system.

Our second concern was and is Market Square. I understand that the Lime I will no longer go to there, and as stated in this hearing there are portions of the community who depend on that to get into and out of that facility where I believe there are several shops.

Thank you for your time.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Thank you, Charles.

Yes, Ma'am?

>> JANET TROTTER: Janet Trotter. I understand that the --

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Could you step up to the mic if you could? It.

>> JANET TROTTER: I understand the Brown F will go to Market Square, so -- Market Square, so there will be access to Market Square.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Yes.

Are there any other comments from the public?

>> KIM TARKOWSKI: I'm Kim Tarkowski I live in Normal. I was out of state when the public Open Houses were being held.

I consequently have gone to your website. I'm blind, I use a screen reader. And the PDF documents that referenced the changes in the routes are not accessible. They come off as images so they don't show up.

And I'm wanting to get some assurances that potentially that is going to be repaired and provided in accessible format for future use, please.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Yes, I was not aware that that wasn't accessible to you, so we will look into that right away.

>> KIM TARKOWSKI: Okay. I would appreciate that. I did talk to somebody last week and they didn't really know in terms of time elements and things like

that. But the best way to get the information on that is through the wide world consortium on disabilities or www.w3C.org I believe it is.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: I do appreciate you bringing that to our attention.

>> KIM TARKOWSKI: Thank you.

>> BARRY MOGK: Are you going to change like Red B, Yellow G. I thought I read that it is still going by IAA Drive where I live. I don't believe --

>> MICK FERRELL: Yes, Barry, it does. It will still go down there. We'll show you.

>> BARRY MOGK: Okay.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think you did a good job speaking, personally.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Thank you. John?

>> JOHN COREY: Hi, my name is John Corey, I live in Bloomington. I support the Transit service. I am familiar with the routes. Where I work people know I use the routes and get asked all the time to help people plan their route. What I see two times a month is we could sure use one hour earlier service in the mornings. Thank you.

>> ANDREW JOHNSON: Thank you.

Okay. Additional comments?

Okay. Hearing none, we will bring the public hearing to a close. We will take a brief break and set up for our Board of Trustee meetings. Thank you.

The Public Hearing concluded at 4:55 p.m.



August 19, 2013

Board of Trustees

Subject: Recommendation to Purchase Bus Destination Signs

BACKGROUND

Connect purchased 1998 40' Gillig buses from Samtrans in FY2013. These buses came with Flipdot destination signs. In July, Connect began upgrading all of the OCU's on all of the 30' and 40' buses. This upgrade was needed to replace outdated technology and streamline the programming of destination signs.

The Flipdot destination signs in the 40' buses are not cooperating with the new operation control unit (OCU). This problem stems from combining old hardware (destination signs) with new software (OCU). The average life expectancy of a Flipdot destination sign is 12 years.

PROPOSED ACTION

Authorize the General Manager to approve a purchase order in the amount of \$36,000 to Luminator for Smart Series destination signs.

KEY FEATURES

- Replacing the destination signs on the 40' buses will standardize the fleet with the same upgraded technology.
- Flexibility of operations for maintenance and transportation department.

BUDGET INFORMATION

We received three quotes and one was nonresponsive. Gillig quoted \$91,674 and Luminator quoted \$36,000. The cost of replacing the destination signs on all 40' buses will not exceed a cost of \$36,000. This will be funded out of the operating budget.

Respectfully,

Isaac Thorne
Procurement Director

Bicyclists to get free LED lights on Sept. 5

Light the Night
event to stress
visibility need

By Mary Ann Ford
mford@pantagraph.com

NORMAL — One of the goals of Normal's bicycle/pedestrian master plan is to educate bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists on the rules of the road.

On Sept. 5, the town, Connect Transit, Good to Go, Bike BloNo and Uptown Partners are partnering to not only help educate bicyclists about the law requiring a bike light, but to provide a free front and rear LED light for bicyclists who attend the Light the Night event.

"We know more people are riding bikes in the evening," said Town Planner Mercy Davison. "We want them to understand how important it is to be visible."

Bicyclists must bring their bikes to the event in the east parking lot at the corner of College Avenue and Constitution Trail Boulevard between 4 and 8 p.m. The lights will be available as supplies last.

A Connect Transit bus will be at the event and those who try putting their bikes on the bike rack at the front of the bus will get a prize, Davison said.

Bloomington Cycle and Vitesse Cycle Shop also will offer bicycle repair stations for minor repairs and Common Action Free School will have two bike repair classes to educate riders on how to service their own bikes.

Davison said while bicy-

clists wait in line to get their lights, they can take a safety quiz and win a prize.

Champaign-Urbana has had Light the Night events for the past three years and attracted as many as 800 bicyclists, Davison said.

"We're taking off of their example," she said.

The Normal event coincides with the alternate Thursday "Lounge About on the Roundabout" summer music series from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Uptown Circle. Music will be provided by "These Old Ghosts."

Council told of transit's need for cash

By Mary Ann Ford
mford@pantagraph.com

NORMAL. — Connect Transit likely will need local money if it wants to increase bus frequency, provide earlier and later service and add Sunday service, the bus system's general manager told the Normal City Council on Monday night.

Andrew Johnson said 65 percent of the bus system's operating expenses comes from state funding, 20 percent from federal dollars and the rest from fares and contracts with such entities as Illinois State University.

"We anticipate (state and federal) funding will be reduced," he said.

That means the bus system will

either have to reduce its service or at the very best, remain as it is.

"If we wish to see growth, we need to look at other ways to fund — and locally," he said.

Normal and Bloomington currently provide some local money for capital purchases, but none for operations.

City Manager Mark Peterson said while he knows it's painful to think about, local funding is likely the only way to improve the service.

Peterson said Connect Transit has "moved light years" since Johnson came on board about two years ago.

The system has 14 fixed routes and uses 35 large buses and 16 vans. It made nearly 2.1 million trips in

fiscal year 2013, he said.

Johnson has been successful getting several grants, including a \$10 million state grant that will be used to buy 10 new buses to supplement the aging fleet.

The system is about to begin a \$150,000 study to look at bus stops, shelters and transfer points with an eye to adding designated stops with shelters and improving transfer points.

The first phase of a tweaked bus route began Aug. 12, he said.

In another matter, the council approved a bid by Stark Excavating to raze the former parks and recreation building at 611 S. Linden St. and the Underwood Park house at 900 S. Linden St. A contract with an out-

side firm that will monitor asbestos abatement brings the cost to \$167,420.

The council also approved an ordinance setting a 7 p.m. Oct. 7 public hearing on a proposed north Normal warehouse tax increment financing redevelopment plan and project that includes an unfinished warehouse at the southeast corner of U.S. 51 and Kerrick Road.

The property was formerly owned by Gary Wilder of Wildwood Industries but during bankruptcy hearings was conveyed to contractors owed more than \$8 million for work performed at the site. The new owners, including Johnston Contractors, need to invest at least \$10 million to finish the building.

LOCAL

WEDNESDAY,
July 31, 2013

A3

Public transit changes OK'd

By Rachel Wells
rwells@pantagraph.com

BLOOMINGTON — Public transit bus routes will change significantly starting Aug. 12 after the Connect Transit board of trustees approved phase one of the system's first major restructuring in decades.

The board on Tuesday unanimously approved the changes — which also are supported by a community advocacy group and the bus system's labor union — after a public hearing at Bloomington City Hall.

The changes affect the Teal J, Green A, Red B, Purple C, Yellow G, Lime I and Redbird Express Red routes.

Though at one time the Teal J revisions called for the elimination of stops on G.E. Road, the proposal was revised prior to approval. The route now will travel on G.E. Road from Hershey Road to Leslie Drive.

The late-night Green A route also will remain intact.

New maps of the bus system with the approved changes will be available starting Aug. 9.

About 20 residents attended the hearing but few spoke publicly. The concerns of those who did centered on the fact that the new routes eliminate many stops within parking lots in favor of nearby street stops where there aren't any shelters.

Connect Transit General Manager Andrew Johnson said the system is close to embarking on a study to

optimize shelter locations, stops and transfer points, and that the public also would be asked to weigh in on those issues.

The changes approved Tuesday are a scaled-back version of more sweeping restructuring plans from about a year ago. After a backlash then, Connect Transit revised its original proposal and hosted several open houses to solicit public feedback.

"We had to start somewhere and people weren't necessarily thrilled with where we started, but it got the conversation started," Johnson said.

He said the approved changes are the first phase in what could be a four-phase approach to fully updating all routes. He said that in the future, the transit system would stick to an "inclusive and collaborative" approach.

The Committee to Ensure Fair Transit, an advocacy group that formed to oppose Connect Transit's original proposal last year, said in a statement delivered by Charles Smith that it generally supports the scaled-back changes and appreciates the transit system's improved outreach efforts.

Amalgamated Transit Union Local No. 752 also supports the first set of incremental changes.

"I think for the most part they are positive changes," said local President Mick Ferrell. He said he understands riders' concerns but added, "I think once they (riders) are used to it, they'll see it does improve the system."

Bloomington leaders begin quarter-cent sales tax exploration
2:12PM Thursday
July 25, 2013

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Requests could be coming to Bloomington and Normal from schools, transportation, community service, and public safety outlets. (WJBC file photo)

By Zach Dietmeier

BLOOMINGTON - Discussions over a potential quarter-cent sales tax increase in Bloomington-Normal aren't far along, but members of Bloomington's leadership are taking plenty of feedback.

Ward 6 Alderman Karen Schmidt said a YMCA Community Center including a new soccer complex proposal is just one of the possibilities. The local school districts are in the early stages of discussing a one percent sales tax increase for Nov. 2014, the county is exploring an increase for public safety funds, and Connect Transit is also looking for money in the middle of route and service restructuring.

"We're getting all kinds of letters of advocacy without ever seeing proposals," Schmidt said at Monday's city council meeting. "I think individually some of us have visited with the parties offering requests."

Bloomington City Manager David Hales said there is expressed interest in proposals but nothing is on the record with the city or Town of Normal.

"I have not received any requests and the mayor has indicated he has not either," Hales said. "However, we do anticipate within the next couple of months these developers and petitioners to come forward with requests for a sales tax increase."

While many groups will be looking for a piece of the sales tax payout, Hales said a referendum might not be needed.

"The council does have the option to put out a non-binding referendum and see if the population would favor that," he said. "However, the council could also move to just increase the home-rule sales tax by a quarter percent."

Bloomington aldermen expressed concerns this week surrounding the potential requests and how funding would be determined. Schmidt said the growing number of unofficial proposals will need attention over whether or not they even require a tax increase.

"I'm very interested in knowing where these are in terms of, is the soccer/YMCA proposal coming to us a formal proposal?" Schmidt said. "We're trying to get our hands around where these are and how we will vet them and what the timetable is and when we get to ask the really important questions about these thoughts."

Hales said there's a lot of talk to sift through and a clearer picture will be present in two to three months.

Zach Dietmeier can be reached at zach.dietmeier@cumulus.com.

Turning To Sales Tax Hikes

Mon, 22 Jul 2013 03:55:50 CDT

By: Charlie Schlenker



There are at least four potential sales tax increases under discussion in Bloomington Normal. WGLT's Charlie Schlenker reports it is unclear how the public will respond to this passel of possible taxes.

00:00 07:39

Every day tens of thousands of McLean County residents buy something, including this breakfast for me on the way to work.

"Thank you for choosing McDonalds, How may I help you? Yes I'd like a sausage burrito and a large diet doctor pepper. Do you want hot sauce with that burrito?"

On top of the price, people pay sales tax to the state, the county, and either Bloomington or Normal. The current rate is seven and three quarters percent for the area.

"Okay, if your order is correct on the screen that's gonna be 2.20 at the first window. Pull up please. Thank you."

These are the current groups with their hands out. School districts led by Unit Five are considering asking voters next year for a county wide sales tax to benefit school facilities and maintenance in the county. Connect Transit planning documents call for exploration of a sales tax hike in the twin cities to support the bus system. The Prairie Cities Soccer League and the YMCA are finishing up a proposal for new facilities they argue would benefit the public. And down the road, McLean County Government leaders might decide they need a sales tax bump to fund law enforcement and or jail operations or renovation.

"I think there is a sales tax trend and it's statewide largely driven by tax caps."

McLean County Board Chairman Matt Sorenson says areas that have caps on property tax increases have no other option to raise new revenue for programs and services and that has started the ball rolling even for places like McLean County that do not have caps.

"I obviously am concerned about that and you know we already are in a situation in McLean County in our metro area I mean we've got fairly high sales taxes from a lot of people's standards."

Certainly, twin cities sales tax rates are high compared to rural areas which have very little local sales tax. But, compared to other mid sized cities in the region, McLean County is actually between a quarter percent...and a point AND a quarter LOWER than other places. David Hales is the City Manager for Bloomington.

"From an economic development standpoint we need to be very conscious about what might happen to our competitive position."

Hales says for example, sales tax in the city of Chicago is so much; the city loses substantial revenue to the suburbs. Hales says even in central Illinois people are willing to travel for a deal.

"No I don't think it is a captive market because the Champaigns, the Peorias, the Decatur, they are not that far away. And we already know based on our retail sales analysis that there is still leakage."

Opinions vary on how much higher sales taxes can go without hurting the McLean County business climate. Mark Peterson, the City Manager for the Town of Normal, says he thinks only a disparity of more than three or four percent would change consumer behavior.

"I don't think most people are aware of the difference from one community to the next. I don't think most consumers are that sophisticated. I don't blame them. I deal with these things every day and I can't remember what Champaign is versus Peoria, versus Galesburg."

Economists say that's true for everyday items, but for single purpose purchases consumers can be price conscious. For instance, Mayor Chris Koos of Normal points out auto buyers make up a big chunk of sales tax revenue.

"You know I think if we got a percent above...as you deal with higher ticket items the impact and differentiation of taxes is more profound."

If the sales tax difference is too much, City leaders say they could count on Chambers of Commerce in nearby communities to advertise the discrepancy in trying to woo Bloomington Normal buyers elsewhere.

Complete tax skeptics might be wondering whether the public can stand the burden of even a little more sales tax for fear it will suppress consumer spending. Economist Michael Seeborg at Illinois Wesleyan University says there's a wealth of data, largely related to income tax levels, showing there IS a point above which taxation kills off individual incentive to produce economic activity. But he says that's not a great worry.

"I think in most economists argue that in most areas it's quite a ways off."

Of course real economic hardship is a different question than the perception of pain and what the public is willing to put up with. Leaders we spoke to for this story agree the community would not tolerate passage of all four potential sales tax hikes in a year and a half period.

"And I think the public has to be the traffic cop on this."

Mayor Koos of Normal says even though the YMCA and Prairie Cities Soccer proposal could be decided by simple majority votes of each city council, the actual hurdle needs to be much higher. He says he needs to know that the public wants it.

"And profoundly know that. Not just a couple of e-mails coming my way. I want to see community organization. I want to see people talking about it in forums. I want to hear from the public and more so than we normally do."

Bloomington Mayor Tari Renner has said he thinks it will require an advisory referendum to convince the council to change the sales tax.

It is still early for all the groups eyeing sales tax hikes. They have cases to publicize. Unit Five leaders say their schools are bursting at the seams and they need to build more. The Federal Aviation Administration has told the soccer league to get out of the airport glide path. The YMCA building that serves key parts of the community is aging. Federal support to transit systems looks like it will fall off the table in a few years. Bus service could get really ugly without local help. And county coffers are tight even though leaders have taken public pride for years in making each nickel scream.

Each entity may also have weaknesses as their campaigns proceed. County Board Chairman Matt Sorenson worries the YMCA and the Soccer League proposal could set a dangerous precedent.

"I feel like when you start putting taxes in to support non government entities, as good as the cause is, they are still not government entities. At what point in time do you then have to deal with dozens and dozens if not hundreds of not for profits around the state of Illinois that all have worthy programs. It just feels like a dangerous step."

The School district proposal could upset existing revenue structures. As much as schools have depended on property taxes in the past, municipalities have turned to sales taxes. City Manager Mark Peterson of Normal says sales tax revenue is now more attractive to school districts than a traditional property tax referendum.

"One percent in Mclean County would raise probably about 16 million a year and that's every year forever and there is no need to go out to public referendum every time you want to issue bonds for a school improvement or a new building."

Opponents could argue they prefer the strict limits and sunset that a traditional property tax referendum requires, and that the only accountability for the sales tax money would be at the school board ballot box.

All the groups considering asking for sales tax money know about the others. Peterson and others muse they could combine their approaches.

"There is some sort of a limit that will be imposed by the electorate. There is a keen awareness of the need to...let's work together so we don't spoil this for everyone."

But, he says talks have not yet progressed to the point of accepting a division of revenue or even a unified proposal.

Of course, voters might decide that in the words of one significant political grouping...they are Taxed Enough Already. If that happens there is an old saying in politics...you get the kind of government you pay for. And Bloomington City Manager David Hales says the community should not want to let its guard down on quality of life issues.

"Because Bloomington is still a growing metro area we're going to continue to have those cost pressures to provide greater services."

"Anything else for you? No thanks. \$8.77"

I'm Charlie Schlenker, WGLT News.

(Cash register jingles / tape rips/ drawer shuts)