

CONNECT TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
BOARD MEETING MINUTES – JUNE 22, 2021

351 Wylie Drive
Connect Transit – Board Room (virtual)
Normal, Illinois 61761

A meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held on June 22 , 2021, at 4:30 p.m. at Connect Transit with some Board Members participating in the meeting virtually.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Trustee Judy Buchanan
 Trustee Linda Foster
 Vice-Chairman Julie Hile
 Trustee Tim McCue
 Trustee Deb Presley
 Trustee Mandava Rao
 Chairman Ryan Whitehouse

CITY MANAGERS: Town of Normal Manager Pam Reece - Absent
 Bloomington Deputy City Manager, Billy Tyus - Present

STAFF PRESENT: Mark Peterson, Interim General Manager
 Jill Baxter, Board Clerk
 Steve Stockton, IT Manager
 Patrick Kuebrich, Finance Director
 Jeff Holtke, Marketing Manager
 Brady Lange, Maintenance Manager / Procurement
 Shelly Perry, Operations Manager

The regular Board Meeting of the Connect Transit Board of Trustees was called to order by Chairman Ryan Whitehouse at 4:30 p.m. Roll call was taken and Trustee Foster led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of May 25, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes
2. Disbursements for the month of May 2021
3. Monthly Statistical Report for May 2021
4. Cardinal Infrastructure Federal Report
5. Cornerstone Illinois Weekly Update

Chairman Whitehouse called for a *Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda*. Trustee Buchanan so moved, seconded by Trustee Foster.

DISCUSSION

Trustee Buchanan stated that she sees ridership is up over last year.

Trustee Foster commented that with ridership up, that shows that the community has confidence in us.

Rollcall vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan; Trustee Foster; Vice-Chairman Hile; Trustee McCue; Trustee Presley;
Trustee Rao; Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None.

The Board approved the *Consent Agenda*.

NEW BUSINESS

Recommendation to Award Contract for Improvements of Fifty-One (51) Bloomington Bus Stops

Chairman Whitehouse entertained a *Motion for Recommendation to Award Contract for Improvements of Fifty-One (51) Bloomington Bus Stops*, moved by Trustee McCue, seconded by Vice-Chairman Hile.

Interim General Manager Peterson stated Mr. Brady Lange will explain the *Recommendation*.

Mr. Lange stated that Connect Transit has set out a goal of improving all of our bus stops throughout the City and Town by 2024 and this is the next group of stops that we have identified and moved forward with. We have 51 stops that are in the City of Bloomington. We typically split the stops between the City and Town because we work with the Engineering Departments of each municipality to move those stops forward. These are only in the City of Bloomington and we will begin construction as soon as IDOT approves the procurement. As you can see, three bids were received and we are going with the lowest bidder, J.G. Stewart. This company completed our last group of stops for Connect so they are very familiar with the project. The total for all 51 stops is \$206,090 and this project is completely funded by IDOT by the *Rebuild Illinois Capital Grant Program* as well as the *DOAP Debt Service*. We are excited to begin the next group of stops. This project includes 18 semme seat benches for some of the stops.

There was no further discussion.

Rollcall vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan; Trustee Foster; Vice-Chairman Hile; Trustee McCue; Trustee Presley;
Trustee Rao; Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None.

The Board unanimously approved the *Recommendation to Award Contract for Improvements of Fifty-One (51) Bloomington Bus Stops*.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Whitehouse commented that he sits on Congressman Davis' *Transportation Advisory Committee* and he was invited and asked Mr. Peterson and Mr. Lange to join him. We had a good conversation about the next transportation infrastructure bill. In the first markup of the bill, we are still in the running for our appropriation of a little over \$3M. Again, thank you to Congressman Davis. Our congressional delegation has taken care of this system and are still fighting for our system. We want to thank them for that.

INTERIM GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Update on Resumption of Fares

Mr. Peterson stated that we have begun the implementation of fares the first of this month. All in all, it has gone smoothly. We have had some farebox issues that we are dealing with that generally the customers are not aware of. Some of them are mechanical issues and some of them are software. We are responding and getting those corrected. The riders have not experienced much of a problem. There have also been a couple of cases where the passes get stuck and we have had to replace those. The feedback from the drivers is that they have had no pushback from customers. If a rider said they were not aware we are charging fares again on the 1st of June, public announcements were pushed out hard and notices have been on the buses constantly. Most of the issues experienced are on our end and we are getting those resolved.

Update on Downtown Transfer Center

Mr. Peterson stated that there is a lot going on behind the scenes. Most notably, we did get our first property appraisal completed but we will have to have another appraisal later in the process. We had hoped to have a *Recommendation* for a consultant to perform a NEPA – a very comprehensive environmental study. We did receive proposals but we are still in the final stages of evaluating those proposals but very soon we will be prepared to present a *Recommendation* which is the next major step in the process. The NEPA study is a federal requirement and has to be completed before we acquire the property. It is not an inexpensive process and it is a time-consuming process but we will give the Board a briefing on that and it is possible we may ask the Chairman to call a special meeting at some point this month so we can keep this project moving forward.

DISCUSSION

Trustee Buchanan stated that you may not be at liberty to discuss the appraisal but was it in the ballpark?

Mr. Peterson responded that he thought it was realistic. It was not surprising and was in the range that we all had expected.

Chairman Whitehouse stated that we will be transparent with the appraisal.

Mr. Peterson stated that the second appraisal will take place after the NEPA study is completed because the NEPA could have some implications on the property.

Trustee Foster asked a question about the study itself. How much time do you anticipate that taking?

Mr. Peterson stated that the worst-case scenario – 18 months for the study alone. We have heard this from other agencies and we didn't believe it. A lot depends on what they find so it is hard to say and it could go quicker than that but he believed that 18 months is a possibility. It's a very onerous and difficult requirement but we have to follow it.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Trustee Foster stated it looks as though the community is supporting us. We haven't forgotten them and it is great to see they haven't forgotten us and she is pleased to see buses with quite a few people on the bus. In addition to that, what the staff is doing to keep things going is in the public's eye by the media and our website. People need to know that we are not going anywhere. She is happy to hear that things are moving behind the scenes when we don't see the action, we are moving forward. Now we know that it may be a little while.

Mr. Peterson stated we will be pushing as hard as we can. When that contract comes to you, the consultant will be at the meeting with a presentation to give you a lot more information about this process and what it involves so that you have a clear understanding. There will be updates along the way and some other activities going on with that and you will hear from time to time our updates.

Trustee Rao commented about the COVID situation and asked if it is still mandated for passengers to wear the masks.

Mr. Peterson stated that it is still mandatory until further notice for airports, rails, and transit passengers and the drivers that everyone wear a mask. We don't know when that will be relaxed and have no idea because we haven't gotten any indication. However, they did reaffirm that transit has to still wear a mask and we will implement whatever the powers-at-be say to implement. Until they say it is clear, we will wear the masks.

Vice-Chairman Hile conveyed her thanks to staff and Mr. Peterson. There is a lot going on and for us to be able to have short meetings shows that staff has it handled. The fact that we have such confidence in Mr. Peterson and the staff is not easy to achieve, so thank you.

Trustee Presley expressed her thanks and excitement that we have more bus stops being completed and that is great news. She appreciated the commitment by our agency to recognize that need and thanked the Board.

Deputy City Manager Billy Tyus inquired if we could announce that we took this action on the Bloomington bus stops tonight. We want to let the community know that we are actually working towards filling the gap. He thought it would be worth doing and something to consider.

ADJOURNMENT INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chairman Whitehouse entertained a Motion to Adjourn into Executive Session, moved by Vice-Chairman Hile, seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

AYE: Trustee Buchanan; Trustee Foster; Vice-Chairman Hile; Trustee McCue; Trustee Presley; Trustee Rao; Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None.

Motion carried and the Board meeting adjourned into Executive Session at 4:47 p.m.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

Chairman Whitehouse entertained a Motion to Adjourn, moved by Vice-Chairman Hile, seconded by Trustee Rao.


Rollcall was taken as the Board moved back into Regular Session at 5:14 p.m.

Rollcall vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan; Trustee Foster; Vice-Chairman Hile; Trustee McCue; Trustee Presley; Trustee Rao; Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None.

Motion carried and the Board meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.


Trustee Judy Buchanan, Board Secretary


Jill Baxter, Board Clerk

[SEAL]

