

CONNECT TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES – DECEMBER 15, 2020

**351 Wylie Drive – Training Room
Normal, Illinois 61761**

A Special Board meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held on December 15, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. at Connect Transit in the Training Room with Board Members participating in the meeting virtually.

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

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Trustee Linda Foster (excused absence)

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

STAFF PRESENT: Mark Peterson, Interim General Manager
Jill Baxter, Board Clerk
Patrick Kuebrich, Finance Director
Steve Stockton, IT Manager
Brady Lange, Maintenance Manager

The Special Board Meeting of the Connect Transit Board of Trustees (virtual meeting) was called to order by Chairman Ryan Whitehouse at 4:30 p.m. Roll call was taken and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of 2021 Board Meeting Dates

Chairman Whitehouse called for a *Motion for Approval of 2021 Board Meeting Dates*. Secretary Buchanan so moved, seconded by Deb Presley.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Whitehouse stated that we will continue to hold all meetings virtually in the Connect Transit Board Room until the COVID-19 vaccination is completely implemented or unless otherwise specified; noting that there will not be a meeting in December.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board unanimously approved the *2021 Board Meeting Dates*.

*Recommendation For Selection of Harris Rand Lusk as Executive Recruitment Firm
for General Manager Position*

Chairman Whitehouse called for a *Motion for Recommendation For Selection of Harris Rand Lusk as Executive Recruitment Firm for General Manager Position*. Trustee Buchanan so moved, seconded by Trustee McCue.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Whitehouse thanked the staff individuals that assisted in organizing all of the responses for the Trustees on the sub-committee, with a special thanks to Billy Tyus, Pam Reece and Trustee Hile, for assisting in the interviews of the top three (3) firms who responded to Connect's RFP. The Chairman stated that the consensus amongst the four (4) Trustees on the sub-committee was that this was an excellent recruitment firm candidate for what the Board is trying to accomplish at Connect Transit. We had five (5) recruitment firms respond to our RFP and we interviewed the top three (3) over Zoom.

Trustee Hile stated that she wanted to thank Brady Lange, Julie Dockham and the staff for putting an RFP together that garnered the responses that are a representative of the quality resources that are available in the industry.

Trustee Buchanan stated that she appreciated all of the hard work of those which resulted in the *Recommendation* brought to the Board today. Trustee Buchanan inquired whether a discussion regarding the size of the transit agencies that the top firms have worked with was a consideration?

Chairman Whitehouse responded that the sub-committee compiled a questionnaire/evaluation for each of the three (3) top firms for each firm to complete and return. Brady Lange relayed some of the questions on the questionnaire/evaluation were:

- Detail experience as it relates to transit;
- Detail search process;
- Discuss recent searches and successful placements each firm has made;

- Discuss what distinguishes their firm from other firms;
- Discuss searches for similar-sized agencies or organizations;
- Discuss approach to finding diverse candidates; and
- Discuss firm's pricing proposal.

Trustee Hile offered information that the recruitment firm that the sub-committee is recommending to the Board has placed executive-level transit professionals in the New Jersey Transit System which is adjacent to one of the largest and complex systems in the country. They have also placed executives in Ann Arbor and in Grand Rapids, as well. This was a small representative sample but those are a handful that she made notes of as she was wondering the same thing as Trustee Buchanan.

Trustee Presley inquired about how the recruitment firm was going to get to know Bloomington-Normal and how do they determine what the strengths and challenges a candidate may face here in our community. More specifically, how would this firm integrate or seek out input from stakeholders in the Bloomington-Normal area?

Chairman Whitehouse responded that there were some main reasons why the sub-committee chose Harris Rand Lusk. During HRL's PowerPoint, the firm presented to the sub-committee a very detailed outline of what its search process involves. The Chairman continued to state that one of the reasons he was comfortable with HRL was that they are the experts who can help identify individuals in transit industries who might be good candidates for Connect Transit. He stated he believed that they will work with us as a Board to identify what that process is going to look like in the future. We will all have a say in the things we are looking for and compromise will come into play as there may be certain things not everyone will agree upon. He stated that he trusts this firm by the people and its resume and by the people they have placed and they have an understanding how to pull the process together and give us feedback. With all of their experience, they can tell us what the pros and cons are. Chairman Whitehouse stated he is fully confident that they will consult with us as an organization to find the way that makes us as a system comfortable but also bring in the best practices while we are performing this process.

Trustee Presley inquired whether HRL had given any examples of how they have done that with other searches? How did they seek out the community and how did they seek out what would be a good fit?

Chairman Whitehouse stated that HRL talked about some of the challenges we might face due to COVID and identified that there would be some opportunities and depending how far we wanted to go into having stakeholder input; meaning having public meetings with people; we might actually alienate some candidates that might want to come to our community. We had those types of talks and Chairman Whitehouse stated that he is confident that they are aware of those different processes and what he took from the firm is that they would bring their expertise to the table and consult with us as a Board and a system, they would help tailor how we would want to do that in a way that meets with what we are trying to accomplish.

Trustee Hile added that there were three (3) steps from HRL, one of which was an individual interest in a vote-run Board Members and at our direction with our partnership convening some focus groups to

understand the pulse of the community which could lead to their taking another look at our job description to make sure that it accurately reflects the competencies that we seek at this time. That was a piece of the conversation that included a desire for someone with strong leadership and community engagement skills and perhaps a mid-career person. Continuing, Trustee Hile stated that in her conversation with HRL she asked the question about what their means of assessing candidates' community engagement and political advocacy competencies and the HRL representative responded that every search they do is build some kind of community interaction situation for the last two candidates, in particular. She believed that HRL would keep an eye on that from the beginning and all the way to the end of the process. She continued to state that during her interview with HRL, the representative stated that as he had already been keeping an eye on Bloomington-Normal, he has already thought that he had some good ideas of candidates and prospects for Bloomington-Normal already and he stated that he thought we were likely to attract some very highly-qualified number twos. The HRL representative we interviewed with is also the longest serving Executive Board Member for APTA and having been in the industry for years, he has been keeping track of us. The combination of interviews, focus groups, to job description and the interview process, that would bring our candidates into contact with community members and how we are going to be able to do that during a pandemic, drives their plan for getting the right person in the right seat for us.

Trustee McCue stated he had no questions at this point and most had been covered in the discussion so far. There was no further discussion.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board unanimously approved the *Recommendation For Selection of Harris Rand Lusk as Executive Recruitment Firm for General Manager Position.*

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Whitehouse thanked the employees of Connect Transit for all of their hard work in 2020. 2020 has been difficult for our riders, our employees, and everyone in the community. He believed that Connect Transit rose to the occasion and stated that he was proud of the system, stating that the employees, drivers and support staff excelled in 2020 and thanked all of them for making the Board Member's job easier. He also thanked the Board of Directors and stated that Connect Transit in 2021 has a lot to look forward to such as the solar projects, the beginning of a Downtown Transfer Station, the arrival of new electric buses, and we will have a new General Manager joining us in 2021. The Chairman personally thanked Mark Peterson for stepping up to the plate by assisting us as Interim General Manager. Lastly, he stated that he wanted to thank our riders for putting up with what we are trying to accomplish at Connect Transit.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Trustee Buchanan stated that early in 2020, we had the *Connect to the Future Workgroup*, of which she stated that she was proud to be a part of and that we are not yet done but we will get there.

Trustee Presley thanked the subcommittee who brought forward the prospects of a search firm for the General Manager position and she appreciated all the time and effort involved in this task. She stated it was very heartwarming to see the buses in the City and Town continuing to provide transportation to those who are sorely in need of transit.

Trustee McCue stated that since joining the Board, he has enjoyed working with the Board and feels more connected to the community and is excited about the work that is ahead moving forward.

Trustee Hile reflected on the Board that is in parallel with compliance which is a reflection of our staff and thanked the staff for a tremendous year. As a Board we have a new Chair, a new Vice-Chair, three new Board members and a new member pending from the Mayor of Normal. We have seen a tremendous amount of change as a Board and she thanked the new Board members for the effort put in to get to know those of us have been on the Board awhile and in helping make that transition go smoothly. She is excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

NAY: None.

Motion carried and the Special Board Meeting of December 15, 2020 adjourned at 5:04 p.m.


Trustee Judy Buchanan, Board Secretary


Jill Baxter, Board Clerk

