

CONNECT TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 22, 2020

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

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held on September 22, 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
Trustee Linda Foster
Vice-Chairman Julie Hile
Trustee Tim McCue
Trustee Mike McCurdy
Trustee Deb Presley
Chairman Ryan Whitehouse

CITY MANAGERS: Town of Normal Manager Pam Reece – Present
Bloomington City Manager Tim Gleason represented by Deputy City Manager, Billy Tyus – (arrived at 4:45 p.m.) - Present

STAFF PRESENT: Martin Glaze, Chief Operating Officer
Jill Baxter, Board Clerk
Patrick Kuebrich, Finance Director
Jeff Holtke, Marketing Manager
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

The September monthly 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 the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of August 25, 2020 Board Meeting
2. Disbursements for the month of August 2020
3. Monthly Statistical Report for August 2020
4. Cardinal Infrastructure Federal Report (*Addendum*)

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

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board approved the *Consent Agenda*.

OLD BUSINESS

Chairman Whitehouse stated that before undertaking any new business, the Board will need to take up item F4 on the *Agenda* which was tabled at the last meeting in August and asked for a *Motion* on the *Connect Transit Board Handbook and Email Communications Policy* be moved from New Business to Old Business, moved by Trustee Foster, seconded by Trustee McCue.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board approved the moving of New Business item F4: *Connect Transit Board Handbook and Email Communications Policy* to Old Business.

Connect Transit Board Handbook and Email Communications Policy

Mr. Glaze stated this was the same policy that was presented to the Board in August. There were concerns about who should be answering Connect Transit's day-to day questions rather than Board-related questions which are submitted to the Trustee website. There are procedural processes that can be put in place to have those questions go straight to staff, but the Policy itself provides that all Trustees receive a "Connect-Transit" email address that would be of public record.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Whitehouse commented that he will be supporting this as it would alleviate the need for a Trustee's private email account to be subjected to produce FOIA requests. The process change would be that the Board Clerk would receive copies of incoming emails and the responses that come into the system.

Mr. Glaze stated that this is the process change that was recommended by Staff to alleviate some of the concerns that were brought up at the last meeting and the change would be to have a "CC" to the Board Clerk of each email to individual Trustee members so that if there was a staff-related question, Staff could respond in a timely manner.

Chairman Whitehouse reiterated to the Trustees for clarification that the Board Clerk will receive the "CC" and if it is a technical issue, the Board Clerk will forward the email on to either the General Manager or the appropriate Staff member. However, before the email is answered by Staff, permission will be

requested from the Board Clerk or a member of the Staff if you would prefer a member of the Staff to answer on your behalf.

Trustee McCurdy stated he has no problem in supporting. His main concern was customer service in making certain one customer didn't get several answers from several different Board Members. If this is put into place and staff is copied and everyone is on the same page, he had no issue.

Trustee Presley stated that she believed it important that the "CC" does occur and that if the email answer is better suited for a Staff Member, then Staff would respond appropriately. One of the benefits of Trustees having a "Connect-Transit" email address is (1) that the public can then go to the Board of Trustees and see how to individually or collectively get in touch with each one of the Trustees; and (2) the clarification of FOIA requests. Her understanding is that if there is a FOIA request, it is the responsibility of Connect Transit to fulfill the request. Whereas, if it was a personal email address, the duty would be on us individually, as Trustees.

Mr. Glaze responded that is correct. Right now, using personal email addresses, if a specific topic is FOIA'd and you had emails in your private account that dealt with those topics, you would need to search those and deliver those to Connect Transit. Whereas, if information is on a Connect-Transit email address, it can be located on Connect Transit's server for responses to any FOIA requests.

Vice-Chairman Hile asked for a point of clarification. In terms of the back end, does that mean that any email that we send as Trustees through our Connect-Transit email address will be seen by the Clerk?

Mr. Glaze responded that it can be done by two different ways. We can do every instance of an email or we can do just emails that are sent through the website itself.

Chairman Whitehouse stated that the consensus coming from the Board Member's discussion, any email that comes to a Board Member is going to be "CC'd" to the Board Clerk. All emails that are sent between Trustees or from the website, the Board Clerk needs to be copied. This is the consensus that I understood when talking to Trustees about this issue.

Vice-Chairman Hile stated that what she wanted was to make clear that we all understand because that process is not articulated in our Policy.

Chairman Whitehouse responded that this is an internal procedure that would be placed in our Trustee Handbook.

Trustee Foster inquired that if someone wants to send us an email, each Trustee will have an email address. How will we receive that email?

Chairman Whitehouse stated it will be an Outlook email that you can log-on to through any computer through Microsoft and log-on into Outlook, typing in your username and password and you can use that anywhere.

IT Manager, Steve Stockton, responded that is correct or we can place it on an app on your phone. It is fairly straight-forward. We can give you an address you can go to on the web and you can access that email from anywhere. He offered to assist the Trustees by walking through the process with them on an individual basis.

Chairman Whitehouse told the Trustees that by the end of this week to look for Mr. Stockton to communicate with you to inquire if you are interested in having him assist you with the setup.

Trustee McCurdy wanted to reiterate the Policy to clarify his understanding of the procedure which is on the table. The procedure and process on the back end is that any incoming email whether it is from the Trustees' website or a direct contact email, any reply or conversation thereafter is copied to the Board Clerk.

Trustee Foster inquired what the timeline was to respond to emails.

Chairman Whitehouse stated that as this is a volunteer Board, not a full-time job and therefore he believed it is important. The Board Clerk and/or Staff will be copied and if it is vital and they see that you haven't responded, they would reach out to you and ask if you need help answering a specific email directed to you. He encouraged the Trustees to respond to outside emails as quickly as possible.

Trustee Presley said that if it is something dealing with Operations, etc., that will automatically be taken care of by Staff.

Chairman Whitehouse responded, yes, Staff will reach out to the individual if the subject matter deals with issues Staff can better handle. For instance, if it is an email to the entire Board, he would ask that you allow either Martin or the Chairman, to respond to that message. Let the General Manager or the Chair respond if it is sent to the entire Board. Just remember if one Board Member emails the rest of the Board, we cannot have a "reply-all" back and forth, as that would be in violation of OMA.

Trustee McCurdy reminded everyone to assume all emails are public. There is no private communication here. Adding, to be circumspect in how you communicate and what you say and how you say it.

No further discussion.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board approved *Connect Transit Board Handbook and Email Communications Policy*.

NEW BUSINESS

Recommendation to Extend Suspension of Fares

Mr. Glaze stated that we are still amid a pandemic and we want to keep people as safe as possible. To do that, we are not at a point to have riders touching the farebox continually, crowding up, and standing in line getting ready to pay. People are still hurting in the community and providing rides without charging a fare helps our community economically. Currently, we can still cover the fares with the *Cares Act* money.

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation to Extend Suspension of Fares* (until November 9, 2020) moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Vice-Chairman Hile.

DISCUSSION

Trustee Buchanan inquired of Mr. Glaze if we had heard any complaints from riders who may not consider themselves as providing an essential service and want to or think that they need to ride?

Mr. Glaze stated that everyone is free to ride and our message is simply "use it when you need it" but many are riders that are using it for essential purposes. We are just not promoting high ridership at the moment. We are still discussing front-door boarding and what that looks like.

Trustee Buchanan inquired whether the barriers at the driver's point are in place?

Mr. Glaze affirmed and stated that every bus currently has a plexiglass door/shield for the driver. We made a couple of adjustments with the sliders and the mechanical function of the shields. The shields were specifically made for the pandemic and were not an "off the rack" purchase. Overall, they are working well after a couple of modifications. We wanted to vet the shields before going back to front-door boarding.

There was no further discussion.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board unanimously approved the *Recommendation to Extend Suspension of Fares* (until November 9, 2020).

Recommendation to Approve Universal Access Agreement with ISU

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation to Approve Universal Access Agreement with ISU* moved by Trustee McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Foster.

Mr. Glaze stated this is a 6-month extension with a term period beginning January 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021. It is a flat Contract that is in line with our current 6-month Contract. With lower ridership and uncertainties, it was recommended by ISU and agreed upon by Staff that we keep the Contract flat for the next 6-months.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Whitehouse commented that as Trustees, some may be getting pushback from your Councils that appoint you regarding who is paying what, but he also understands that the current circumstances at ISU now, with less ridership from students, in his opinion it is fair to give them another six (6) months. Once we get through this pandemic, the conversation needs to be made that there will be a rate increase. He stated he has said multiple times he was not giving anymore extensions but with COVID, this presents a difficult situation, and he will support this *Recommendation*.

Trustee Buchanan stated that she is assuming Connect will enforce the mask policy on the Redbird like we do on all the other buses?

Mr. Glaze affirmed and stated there have been no problems. ISU has implemented its own requirements and translates to riding the bus. It's helpful when everyone does the same thing.

There was no further discussion.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board unanimously approved the *Recommendation to Approve Universal Access Agreement with ISU*.

Recommendation to Approve Universal Access Agreement with Heartland Community College

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation to Approve Universal Access Agreement with Heartland Community College* moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Trustee Presley.

Chairman Whitehouse stated that at last month's meeting, the Board approved a Contract with HCC for the term of July 1, 2020 through July 1, 2021 (1 year), but the Heartland Board only approved a 6-month extension (July 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020), due to COVID. Rates will stay the same but this is coming back to the Board to approve a revision of the term of the Contract.

Mr. Glaze stated this is the same Contract approved by the Board last month with the only change to the term of the Contract. This will take us through December of 2020 and back-dated July 1, 2020. We will have continuing conversations with HCC with a new contact person and will bring another Contract to the Board for approval prior to January 1, 2021.

There was no further discussion.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board unanimously approved the *Recommendation to Approve Universal Access Agreement with Heartland Community College*.

Recommendation to Approve Title VI Program

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Recommendation to Approve Title VI Program*, moved by Trustee McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Foster.

The *Title VI Program* is due every three (3) years and is a document that is adopted by the Board and sent to the FTA for approval. Last time this was approved was November of 2017. On the *Recommendation*, Staff has highlighted the areas that were adjusted and most of those reflect service changes and/or member representation and a change to our limited English proficiency portion. Once approved by the Board, it will be sent for FTA approval according to its guidelines as well.

There was no discussion.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board unanimously approved the *Recommendation to Approve Title VI Program*.

Recommendation to Approve Bid for Bus Stop Construction (Addendum)

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation to Approve Bid for Bus Stop Construction*, moved by Trustee McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

Mr. Glaze stated that this *Recommendation* is for the construction of 31 bus stops. We are bringing this to the Board as the Contract is a very large one. We received three (3) bids for these, the other two (2) bids were closer to \$120,000 and \$130,000, so the winning bid was well below that at \$88,000. Connect has worked with J.G. Stewart in the past and they have proven to be a good reliable partner.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Whitehouse inquired if this will be paid for with money from Federal Grants?

Mr. Glaze reported that this will be paid out of local funds. The Federal Grant requires additional steps prior to approval and we were not able to receive those approvals for this set of bus stops. We are working towards getting the approvals for the set of 50 Bloomington stops due in the Spring. We will be working with the FTA on using federal funds for those stops.

Chairman Whitehouse stated that going forward, let's use the Federal Grant monies first.

Trustee Presley inquired if we are using local funds, will DOAP money help match that?

Mr. Glaze stated we were not able to use DOAP money on this set of stops. The direction we are receiving from FTA and IDOT is that there is a very specific process that each one of these stops must go through. By using local funds, it is simpler to achieve permitting by the City, Town, or IDOT which allows a faster approval process. To use the IDOT DOAP or to use Federal funds, we must go through a strenuous process together with a NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) Evaluation that looks at historical effects that a stop may cause, such as: environmental; sociological; and audio. The NEPA Evaluation process is to confirm that each bus stop construction doesn't cause an effect to the surrounding area. To do that, we must compile a lot of information for each individual stop, well above what we have done in the past. It must be sent to FTA for approval, including NEPA approval, then sending to IDOT for pre-approval before we can award. This process takes several months before we can award a Contract to use the Federal funds.

Chairman Whitehouse commented that going forward it makes sense to use the Federal dollars on these projects so that Federal dollars come back to the taxpayers.

Mr. Glaze stated that Federal funds will still be used for bus stop improvements and infrastructure. We have \$500,000 in the Grant. He estimated that \$1.5-\$2M is still going to be required to update all the bus stops.

Trustee McCurdy agreed that we need to use Federal funds first.

Trustee Presley inquired whether we are planning to use \$1.5M in local funds as the idea was to go after additional Federal grants? Except for the timeframe, can you explain why did we not push forward with this project in a manner so that we could use Federal dollars rather than having to use local dollars?

Mr. Glaze stated that the steps for that process were not fully shared until just recently. The FTA oversight person shared the exact steps of the analysis of what we needed to provide. We sent over some clarifications and then sent what we thought would be what they want. There was a "back and forth" of what they really wanted; in a special order; in a special look. We would have to push this project to the Spring and that timetable which we weren't willing to do that at this time but could wait until Spring if the Board so directs.

Chairman Whitehouse stated that you are saying we are going to have to use the \$500,000 to complete the rest of the project and I think you hear clearly that this Board wants you from now on to use Federal

dollars. The Chairman asked the Board if it was willing to allow local dollars to be used this time with the strict enforcement that we want the extra work completed for use of Federal dollars going forward?

Trustee Presley asked what could the local money be used for instead of the Better Bus Stops?

Chairman Whitehouse stated that as Mr. Glaze spoke earlier, we were going to have to use local dollars on top of the Federal dollars as well.

Mr. Glaze clarified that if we use any match each time and perfectly, we can get about \$1.5M which will all go toward bus stop construction and bus stop design. We wanted to use some of that for shelters, semme seats and solar lighting. Unfortunately, those funds couldn't be used for that purchase because those were existing contracts and FTA and IDOT needed to pre-approve the contracts. We were planning on using the Federal funds and then continuing the bus stop construction and design. However, we were not able to use it because of the existing contracts.

Normal Town Manager, Pam Reece, stated that in defense of Mr. Glaze, part of the issue this summer was the delay on the Town of Normal's end. For various reasons, it was a little more delayed than the Town would have liked. She pointed out that she agreed with Martin that there are certainly a lot of hoops to jump through for Federal dollars so you want to make sure that you are bundling your contract effectively to make it worth the hoops.

There was no further discussion.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board unanimously approved the *Recommendation to Approve Bid for Bus Stop Construction*.

Recommendation for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 Marketing Plan

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 Marketing Plan*, moved by Trustee Foster, seconded by Trustee McCue.

Mr. Glaze stated that every year Staff brings the Marketing and Communications Plan to the Board for approval. Obviously, this year is very different with the type of advertisements that we are placing, having to change things up. Going forward we need to be open to a lot of different things. Mr. Glaze turned the floor over to Mr. Jeff Holtke, Connect's Marketing Manager, for a presentation of the FY2021 Marketing Plan.

Mr. Holtke stated that FY2021's plan is similar to last year. Continuing, he stated that the partnerships we have built up with different radio groups in town are Neuhoff; WGLT; and Greater Plains Media. Those have been great for us not only for the partnerships but Greater Plains Media has also been a great media partner for our annual "Stuff the Bus" promotion. This year one thing we would really like

to push are on-air interviews, whether it be monthly or quarterly, to get out there and talk about the Better Bus Stops Campaign or the electric buses or anything coming up so that we can attract a better response; having those one-on-one conversations versus press releases and then hoping that it gets covered. A lot of the groups we are working with now are willing to look at doing some additional spots for us online with trade-offs; giving them bus advertising for spots online. We are really pushing to find more ways to lower our costs and gain exposure. Due to COVID there are not many events, such as Grossinger Motors Arena and the Corn Crib, but we will circle back to those next year. When selling ads for buses, we are crediting the buses versus billboard advertising and how we have 40' moving billboards circulating all over Bloomington-Normal. In-house, we have been branching out with achieving a lot more window advertising using perforated vinyl which look really good. Currently, there is about a \$10,000 surplus to be able to use on things that may pop-up throughout the remainder of the year as COVID changes. However, noting that our main way of advertising has been tabling events and throughout the year we have scheduled 60 events per year but right now we are sitting at only 5 events for 2020 with two (2) coming up as long as they do not get cancelled. Mr. Holtke stated he really believed this plan will be a good one once we start collecting fares again and to have a plan in place where we can blow-out the mobile ticketing and we go cashless.

DISCUSSION

Trustee McCurdy inquired what is the duration of the one banner ad with all three (3) stations with Neuhoff and whether Mr. Holtke has looked at Spotify?

Mr. Holtke responded that it is a pool of 3 or 4 different ads that rotate. We have not looked at Spotify but we have looked at Pandora.

Trustee McCurdy stated that last year he recalls there was general consensus that the Board would be willing to approve a higher marketing budget. Is this a decrease over last year?

Mr. Holtke responded that \$60,000 is for external marketing and \$34,000 for giveaways and promotional material which we use for tabling events, which have been cut short this year due to COVID; therefore, a surplus in this category.

Chairman Whitehouse stated that in conversations with Mr. Glaze, we're holding \$10,000 of that \$60,000 for future endeavors.

Trustee McCurdy stated when COVID ends, we'll want to say, "it's time to go back to work – choose Connect-Transit". We want to make sure we have the money to reach a majority of the population with that message a few times so will the \$10,000 in reserve be enough to do that with Facebook and/or Twitter? If we approved this budget, is there any way to come back for a supplemental amount based on what the needs are to promote the system further if Staff or the Board feels like we want to go in that direction?

Mr. Glaze responded that as things start to change, if the Board feels there is a turn-around with the pandemic and in how we are promoting Connect, the Board could bring this back and apply more

funding towards the budget on this item. On budgets we are staying within our means but there is room for flexibility.

Trustee Presley stated that we should reserve as much of that money for the post-pandemic time period so that we could really stimulate an increase in ridership. The more we can get people excited about post-pandemic life and using public transit in post-pandemic life, the better. She continued to state that the more we can do to look at a more diverse approach including social media and digital media the better because she believes that realm is where people are living.

Mr. Holtke stated that a lot of the groups he works with do not have long-term commitments for digital so if we wanted to throw everything out there, we would have that luxury where we are not locked in until next January. Most of our promotional giveaways have already been bought for the year.

Chairman Whitehouse commented that if people are listening while they are in their vehicle, are they the transit-dependent people who need the system? Are we hitting the right market for the radio? He has a little concern of putting a whole year's marketing budget on radio when we don't know what is going to happen with COVID. He thought that we need to use more of the social platforms reaching more people across the board than just the radio stations.

Trustee McCurdy stated that we could amend the *Motion* by saying it is a 6-month buy. He was also hearing in the conversation that we have dollars to put toward marketing if we need it. He stated that he is comfortable moving forward with this as long as Staff is willing to come back to us with some regular updates to tell us how it is moving along. However, he didn't want to incur additional costs for not buying bulk in advance but stated he would like to see a more diverse pallet of choices.

Chairman Whitehouse wanted to clarify Trustee McCurdy's approval: approving the \$60,000 Marketing budget – or are you asking Mr. Holtke to come back with a revised budget of how we are going to use social media?

Trustee McCurdy stated he would rather see a 6-month budget.

Trustee Buchanan inquired of Mr. Holtke that in this proposal if he will be signing contracts that commit us to a full year?

Mr. Holtke stated yes for some of them and if the Board prefers, in smaller slots. He can come back to the Board with a breakdown.

Trustee Buchanan stated that in talking about the \$10,000 on hold for post-pandemic, we felt that we needed to hold that so that we can hit the ground running when we get an all-clear. However, her interest was in how much flexibility we will have when post-pandemic arrives.

Mr. Holtke stated he could talk to some of the groups he has a good relationship with to where we could be flexible as far as the year-long schedule goes. We have gotten quite a few additional spots. With Neuhoff, they were especially helpful in promoting how we are regularly cleaning the buses. We

put out a spot thanking our essential workers and Neuhoff threw in a lot of extra bonus spots. He stated he can meet with them and inquire.

Trustee Buchanan also inquired if Mr. Holtke could share with the Board why the amount shown for Facebook ads was so small?

Mr. Holtke stated we could bump that up much higher and work-in Twitter. To Trustee McCurdy's comment he responded that we have not done much Twitter advertising but we can explore that avenue as we are building our audiences across our platforms.

Trustee Buchanan stated that she believed more of our audience is probably holding a portable phone in their hand and looking more at Facebook and Twitter so she encouraged Mr. Holtke to look at getting a full balance.

Chairman Whitehouse commented that this Board approve a Marketing budget and not have it so laid out, but can the Trustees authorize \$60,000 and go back and look at this and Mr. Holtke can report back later. Can we just approve a Marketing budget going forward?

Trustee McCurdy stated that even bumping it up to a budget of \$70,000 for Marketing and leave it as it is and reserving \$20,000 to do whatever else we wanted to do.

Trustee McCue stated that he is for a procedural mechanism to allow more flexibility for a new GM who might have additional marketing background and might have ideas about marketing that none of us are considering. If a new GM comes in with a \$20,000 idea that would be something that we would want to pursue.

Trustee Hile stated that she liked our choosing a number in general and trusting our Staff to do their job and apply their expertise to use those funds and report back to us. Just as a reminder to the Board that the CttF *Recommendations* included the *MyConnect Community Campaign*. Strictly speaking, that might be something separate from Marketing and Communications but she wants the Board to keep an eye on that.

Chairman Whitehouse commented that the *MyConnect Community Campaign* is probably its own item and not out of a Marketing budget.

Trustee McCurdy commented that he had said the radio budget was heavy but he didn't know if it was too much on radio if you were to add more dollars to the budget that would then be applied to other categories. He would support additional money going towards Marketing.

Trustee Presley inquired if it was a 6-month plan, would that be for half the dollars or how would that be allocated?

Chairman Whitehouse responded that if we approve the radio and then add more money, you would take half that money and allow that to be spent.

Trustee Presley stated that would give us more information about what it is going to look like when it is post-pandemic whenever that might be. If we did 6 months at half the amount of money right now during the pandemic for advertising, then revisit this in 6 months to decide what amount of money we would want to put forward as well as how that would look as we would be closer to a decision on the GM process.

Trustee Presley moved to amend the *Recommendation for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 Marketing Plan* by proposing that the *FY 2021 Marketing and Communications Plan* be approved for a six (6) month period with Staff looking to add additional platforms of advertisement other than radio advertising. After the six (6) month period, the Plan would be revisited.

Chairman Whitehouse announced the *Amended Recommendation* of Trustee Presley, seconded by Trustee Hile.

There was no further discussion.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

The Board approved the *Amended Recommendation for Approval of Fiscal Year 2021 Marketing Plan* for a six (6) month period.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Website Design

Interim General Manager Glaze stated that for the last several months Staff has been working on different items on the website that need to be improved and/or replaced. We have received many complaints throughout the years for accessibility. The "text to speech" functions are very difficult to use on our current website and the scaling to the phone does not work very well. Many of these issues were talked about during engagement sessions throughout last year. We added fillable forms recently for the *Downtown Transfer Center Survey*. However, it was very generic and gives us a printout but there is no database on the back end to store that data so it is not very intuitive. We would also like the ability to promote detours and announcements. This problem was especially "glaring" during the pandemic as our current website doesn't offer a lot of flexibility and does not allow us to easily inform people. Much of our home screen is "cookie-cutter" and only allows us to edit certain areas. Staff has been investigating and comparing other local websites to see what cost figures it might take to redesign our website. Preliminary quotes received are falling under \$30,000. Staff would like to have the Board's approval of moving forward with a redesign of our website.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Whitehouse noted that the discussion was whether or not the Board was comfortable with having this move forward as a standard practice and allow the General Manager to authorize the expenditure as an internal decision or should this expenditure be brought back to the Board as a *Recommendation*?

After a short discussion, it was the consensus of the Trustees that this expenditure should move forward as standard practice allowing the General Manager to proceed as an internal decision which would be brought back to the Board in the General Manager's report at the next meeting.

Mr. Glaze stated that this was more of an informal informational item to let the Board know this was something that the Staff was working on and whether there was any hesitation from the Board on whether Staff should proceed.

There was no further discussion.

REGULAR SESSION ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Whitehouse called for a *Motion* to adjourn regular session to move the Board into *Executive Session*. Trustee McCurdy so moved, seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

Rollcall vote:

AYE: Trustee Buchanan; Trustee Foster; Vice-Chairman Hile; Trustee McCue; Trustee McCurdy; Trustee Presley; Normal Town Manager, Pam Reece; Bloomington Deputy City Manager, Billy Tyus; Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None.

Motion carried, and the Board of Trustees adjourned regular session at 5:54 p.m. and moved into *Executive Session* to discuss Personnel Matters (5ILCS 120/2(c)(1)).

REGULAR SESSION CONTINUED

Chairman Whitehouse called for a *Motion* to move the Board back into *Regular Session*. Trustee McCurdy so moved, seconded by Trustee Foster.

AYE: Trustee Buchanan; Trustee Foster; Vice-Chairman Hile; Trustee McCue; Trustee McCurdy; Trustee Presley; Normal Town Manager, Pam Reece; Bloomington Deputy City Manager, Billy Tyus; Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None.

Motion passed and the Board returned to regular session.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Vice-Chairman Hile asked Mr. Glaze if he could comment to the Board regarding the *APTA Health & Safety Program* commitment.

Mr. Glaze stated that Connect Transit has signed on to what APTA has provided as best practices from other agencies and communities and what they are doing. Simply, this is a commitment to place the health and safety of our passengers and employees first and foremost before ridership and revenues. It provided many marketing materials that we can customize locally and shares a standardization across all agencies. Our Marketing Manager, Jeff Holtke, has been utilizing a lot of those by posting on social media. Most of the APTA agencies are committed to this and are still pushing in getting everyone on board. APTA is using this as a tool to ask for Federal dollars to be reinvested in transit. Many transits rely on fares and right now they are hurting. Transit like ours which relies on State funding isn't as bad as some of the larger agencies that are cutting routes significantly due to revenue loss. This is a show of solidarity, emphasizing the safety of our passengers and employees.

Chairman Whitehouse turned the floor over to Trustee McCurdy for an announcement.

Trustee McCurdy stated that this will be his last Connect Transit Board Meeting. He is retiring from WGLT and Illinois State University with his last day of work on September 30th and his first day of retirement on October 1. He stated that he will be leaving the community and thus will be unable to serve as Trustee.

Trustees thanked Mr. McCurdy for his service to the Connect Transit Board of Trustees and his contribution to the system over the years.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Whitehouse entertained a *Motion to Adjourn*, moved by Trustee McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

AYE:

Trustee Buchanan; Trustee Foster; Vice-Chairman Hile; Trustee McCue; Trustee McCurdy; Trustee Presley; Normal Town Manager, Pam Reece; Bloomington Deputy City Manager, Billy Tyus; Chairman Whitehouse

NAY: None.

Motion carried and the regular monthly Board meeting adjourned at 6:27 p.m.


Trustee Judy Buchanan, Secretary


Jill Baxter, Board Clerk

[SEAL]