

CONNECT TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES – AUGUST 25, 2020

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

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held on August 25, 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 - Present

STAFF PRESENT: Martin Glaze, Chief Operating Officer
Jill Baxter, Board Clerk
Patrick Kuebrich, Finance Director
Jeff Holtke, Marketing Manager
Julie Dockham, Human Resources

The August monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was called to order by Chairman Ryan Whitehouse at 4:30 p.m.

Chairman Whitehouse called for a motion to allow Billy Tyus, Deputy City Manager of the City of Bloomington to represent Bloomington City Manager Tim Gleason, moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Trustee Foster.

Rollcall vote:

AYE: Trustee Judy Buchanan; Trustee Linda Foster; Vice Chairman Julie Hile; Trustee Tim McCue; Trustee Mike McCurdy; Trustee Deb Presley; Chairman Ryan Whitehouse

NAY: None.

Motion to allow Billy Tyus, Deputy City Manager of the City of Bloomington to represent Bloomington City Manager Tim Gleason, was approved by the Board.

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 July 28, 2020 Board Meeting
2. Disbursements for the months of June and July 2020
3. Monthly Statistical Report for July 2020
4. Cardinal Infrastructure Federal Report

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

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*.

NEW BUSINESS

Presentation of Connect Transit Economic Impact Study by Dr. Frank Beck, ISU Stevenson Center

Martin Glaze introduced Dr. Frank Beck, an associate professor at ISU working in the area of economic development, local policy and persistent poverty, to make his presentation to the Board.

DISCUSSION

Trustee McCurdy stated that the \$5 for every \$1 spent is very close to the national average provided by APTA which is \$4 for every \$1 spent and stating that he thought Connect was positioned well in the community, a little ahead of the average. He questioned the number of riders and asked if staff had looked at the number of rides those riders had taken with 2.2-2.4M rides per year, 904 people seemed a little low and asked how Dr. Beck arrived at that number.

Dr. Beck responded that all the numbers were provided to him after Mr. Glaze had reached out to the contractor who conducted the survey. It was from an estimate from how many different persons were

surveyed through that project. Given how many different persons were surveyed, it was his understanding to catch a certain percentage of the different persons. That number of different persons surveyed, the goal given, was multiplied to come out with 904. Dr. Beck asked Mr. Glaze if he had anything to add.

Mr. Glaze stated staff talked with ETC, the provider of the survey, to which ETC stated they based individual rides on a conservative assumption that each rider would take an average of 2.2 trips a day. Then 9,618 weekday trips (April 2019) was averaged which was the math using the 904 or so riders, taking into account the daily average, and does not take into account how many individuals ride once a week as compared to how many ride seven (7) days a week. Even though there are multipliers considered, this is a conservative estimate that we can say with a fair amount of certainty that it is accurate.

Vice-Chairman Hile asked Dr. Beck what was the timeframe in which this data was collected. Our ridership was on a nice upward trajectory before COVID and she was interested in what period we are actually looking at in the results.

Dr. Beck stated these are pre-COVID numbers of April 2019 and to be clear, the data in the model and the data from Connect are all 2019. This is measured in the impact in calendar year 2019.

Vice-Chairman Hile commented that Connect has a strong infrastructure and room on our buses so there is really a story here to be told that we are ready to carry choice riders and others in our community to increase the return on rider investment.

Trustee Buchanan stated that of the 904 riders, would it be considered appropriate in the report such as this to say that this is a daily estimated or conservative estimate rather than leaving it as is? Her second question relates to the economic impact of the entire county. Is there any percentage that could be used to say for the most part this represents a percentage of Bloomington-Normal residents?

Dr. Beck responded that it would surprise him if the survey was conducted on just one day. The answer is yes, and the answer to the question can be presented in more detail and can be included in the report. Of the persons who ride Connect Transit, and you know how many rides those are per year, yet without the survey, you don't know if it is the same person and without the survey you don't know if they are commuting to work, and without the survey you do not know the household income level, etc. You have a total ridership and based on the survey of the approximately 140,000 in the two communities at this point, but we also know from our commutes each day there are a lot of cars on the road and in our town, taking the bus to work is not the norm. Of that 140,000 members in the two communities, that 904 of those people use Connect Transit to get to work.

In a detailed response to Trustee Buchanan's second question, Dr. Beck stated that the study shows that people are using the bus from a residence to work and Connect Transit is operating in Bloomington and Normal so those riders and their jobs are in Bloomington and Normal. Having said that, the majority of the \$45M is coming from the induced impact from those commuters. If those commuters are residents and workers in Bloomington-Normal, that is by far the driver in the \$45M impact. It is

best to say that the \$45M is the impact on McLean County, but it is also wise to say the vast majority of the \$45M is happening in Bloomington-Normal.

Mr. Glaze also commented on Trustee Buchanan's questions stating that the 904 number is low. If we look at other data we have and we extract individual unique riders such as ISU, HCC and IWU, we average over 400 unique riders in a month. The 904 number is a baseline by stating how many people the survey represents. He stated it is accurate to say that we have only 904 riders in the community.

In response to a question by Trustee McCue, Mr. Glaze stated that he has not seen a specific analysis like this posted for other individual transit agencies for any comparisons, but we can look for that to see how Connect compares to them. APTA usually provides a wholistic view but we can look for that in other transit agencies.

Trustee Presley inquired whether the 904 number represents commuters who are using Connect Transit to go to work which makes more sense to her than total commuter.

Dr. Beck clarified "commuting to work". We can know from the survey that was conducted that if (1) a rider is the sole member of their household; (2) if they are the sole member of their household that is employed; (3) what they are stating is their household income; and (4) we know that they are commuting for work. If someone's annual income is \$25,000 and they are the sole member of their household and they are using Connect Transit to get to work, and their income (for this study) is \$25,000. The 904 is not a number of how many riders Connect Transit has – it is an estimate of the riders who commute for their job.

Chairman Whitehouse thanked Dr. Beck for his study and the time spent on calculating all of the specifics and for his presentation to the Board.

Appointment of Connect Transit Board Interim-Secretary

Chairman Whitehouse stated that with Trustee Bullington's resignation, that leaves our Secretary seat open until June 30, 2021. Chairman stated he had spoken with most of the Board individually and requested a *Motion for Appointment of Judy Buchanan as Connect Transit Board Interim-Secretary*, moved by Trustee McCurdy, seconded by Vice-Chairman Hile. 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 Trustee Judy Buchanan to hold the seat of *Connect Transit Board Interim-Secretary* until next elections to be held in 2021.

Recommendation to Extend Suspension of Fares

Mr. Glaze stated that since March 2020, the Board has voted to suspend collection of fares due to the pandemic. We are recommending that the suspension continue until October 8, 2020. Since March Connect Transit has implemented many procedures including mandatory facemasks, rear-door boarding, and the suspension of fares to reduce crowding while protecting our employees and riders. Physical distancing cannot always be achieved so facemasks are a mandate on all of our buses. The financial loss is approximately \$80,500. This money will be made up from the CARES Act funding Connect Transit received.

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation to Extend Suspension of Fares* (until October 8, 2020) moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Trustee McCurdy.

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 Extend Suspension of Fares* (until October 8, 2020).

Recommendation of Revised Human Resource and Sexual Harassment Policy

Mr. Glaze stated that based on the Supreme Court ruling which makes it illegal to terminate an employee because of their sexual orientation or because they are transgender, the policy where "gender" is referenced in our current policy will be replaced with "sexual orientation and gender identity". There were no other recommended changes to the policy.

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation of Revised Human Resource and Sexual Harassment Policy* moved by Trustee Presley, seconded by Trustee McCurdy.

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 of Revised Human Resource and Sexual Harassment Policy*.

Recommendation of Heartland Community College Bus Service Contract

Mr. Glaze stated that a *Recommendation of Heartland Community College Bus Service Universal Access Agreement* is being brought before the Board for discussion and a vote. Connect has been partnering with Heartland College for many years now. This Agreement would be for the FY2021 and would backdate to July 1, 2020. The amount for this Contract is \$96,000. Heartland students and employees are able to utilize any of the routes within our fixed route system simply by swiping a student/faculty identification card. This Contract is different from past contracts as past contracts were based on a "per-ride" percentage. This new Contract is a flat renewal which is a guaranteed amount for the entire year regardless of ridership. If ridership does not perform as in previous years, Connect will still receive the full amount. If ridership proves over and above previous years, Heartland would be receiving a discount. This is based on an average of 400 unique riders based on past data collected. We charged them a per month cost of \$20 which is a 50% discount from Connect's general public \$40 monthly pass. The Contract has been approved by the Heartland Board of Trustees and is ready for Board approval.

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation of Heartland Community College Bus Service Contract* moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Vice-Chairman Hile.

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 of Heartland Community College Bus Service Universal Access Agreement*.

Recommendation of Illinois Wesleyan Universal Access Service Agreement

Mr. Glaze stated that before the Board is a *Recommendation of Illinois Wesleyan Universal Access Service Agreement*. Illinois Wesleyan University approached Connect about providing service from campus to Uptown Normal. Due to the pandemic, many of their students are displaced from campus and will be staying at hotels in Uptown. They hold classes that run past Connect's normal service hours. Our Green Route goes past the Wesleyan University on Main Street and travels straight to Uptown. The University's request was to extend this route by one (1) hour on Monday-Wednesday. This will provide two (2) additional trips from Downtown: 1) at 10:15 p.m.; and 2) at 10:45 p.m. We are charging them the official cost per hour of last year. It costs Connect Transit \$82.95 per hour for fixed route service and we will

be charging them the full hourly amount for a total of 35 days (ending December 31, 2020). The total contract price is \$2,903.25 and we are asking for the Board's approval on this Contract.

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation of Illinois Wesleyan Universal Access Service Agreement*, moved by Trustee Foster, seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

DISCUSSION

Chairman Whitehouse commented that this is exactly what community partnerships look like. We have the resources to provide this to them to make sure that they can bring our students back safely to our community.

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 of Illinois Wesleyan Universal Access Service Agreement*. (Contract Term: 08-31-2020 to 11-18-2020)

Connect Transit Board Handbook and Email Communications Policy

Mr. Glaze stated that the Handbook itself has not changed except for the proposed addition of an *Email Policy*. This *Policy* requests that all Trustees have an @Connect-Transit.com email address. The new *Policy* states that the Trustees need to be aware that this is subject by review by the public and would fall under any FOIA requests and instructs that when responding to an email, do not "reply to all" which could present a possible violation of a "quorum".

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Connect Transit Board Handbook and Email Communications Policy*, moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Trustee McCue.

DISCUSSION

Trustee McCurdy stated that this could present some problematic issues. He remains concerned about Trustees having an exclusive email address. If four (4) Trustees get the same question about an operational detail, a Board Member or future Board Member may take it upon themselves to try to answer that question and they may be incorrect. We could run the risk of customers getting multiple answers which doesn't really help them. He is uncertain if this is needed if the staff is forwarding emails to Board Members which is a situation that we have faced and resolved.

Vice-Chairman Hile stated that she believed this topic is a good one for conversation at a Board Retreat. She believed that this kind of set-up is entirely consistent with elected Boards or Agencies with taxing

authority, but not so much for the kind of Board we are and the infrastructure that we have as a Board. She believed it was a very good discussion for the Trustees to have but she agreed with Trustee McCurdy that it warrants further discussion than we are able to have in a regular Board Meeting.

Trustee McCurdy moved to table this item on the *Agenda*, seconded by Vice-Chairman Hile.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: Trustee Presley

The Board approved the *Motion to Table Connect Transit Board Handbook and Email Communications Policy* until the next Board Meeting.

Recommendation of Solar and Electrical Infrastructure IFB

Mr. Glaze stated that several years ago Connect Transit won a *Low or No Emissions Grant* which awarded Federal funds of \$1.5M. This was to be used for solar infrastructure and electric buses. Connect later won an award of \$6M *Bus and Bus Facilities Grant* for electric buses. This was also about the time that Connect started looking into the IDOT DOAP services to utilize unused operating funds for capital purchases to turn \$7M into \$21M to replace all of the aging buses that are currently in its fleet. This is a *Recommendation* that Wilcox Energy be awarded the Contract for solar array that will power both the Maintenance facility and the Administration facility and a railed access point to maintain the solar panels; adding a small extension off of the back of the bus barn which will house the electrical charging units that Proterra utilizes to power the electric bus which will also be utilized for future battery storage. A secondary line from the grid powered by CornBelt Energy will be installed specifically for charging the battery electric buses. By providing a secondary line, Connect is able to take advantage of a special EV (electric vehicle) rate providing it with a 30% discount as compared with Connect's current commercial rate. The total cost of the Wilcox Contract is \$1,715,000. Funding for this project will be 56% State DOAP debt service funding and 35% will be from Federal grants. No local money will be used.

Chairman Whitehouse brought attention to the Board to understand that this *Recommendation* does not include the transformer work for the facilities so there will be an additional cost from CornBelt in the future for transformer work.

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion for Recommendation of Solar and Electrical Infrastructure IFB*, moved by Trustee McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Foster.

Representatives from Cornbelt, Keith Engineering (Design Work), and Jeremy Wilcox representing Wilcox Energy were in attendance (virtually) and spoke briefly to the Board.

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 of Solar and Electrical Infrastructure IFB*.

Recommendation for Amendment to Connect Transit By-Laws to Allow Remote Participation in Executive Session

Mr. Glaze stated that since the pandemic, the Governor, through Executive Order has allowed remote participation in all open meetings. Our *By-Laws* specifically state that "Executive Meetings must be attended in person." This *Recommendation* is an *Amendment* to forego that requirement which would only be valid through the Executive Order until such Order is terminated.

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation for Amendment to Connect Transit By-Laws to Allow Remote Participation in Executive Session*, moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Trustee McCurdy.

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 for Amendment to Connect Transit By-Laws to Allow Remote Participation in Executive Session*.

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 Foster.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

Motion carried, and the Board of Trustees adjourned regular session at 5:58 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.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

Motion passed and the Board continued with the remaining items on the *Agenda*.

Appointment of Interim General Manager

Chairman Whitehouse asked for a *Motion* on the *Appointment of Martin Glaze as Interim General Manager* moved by Trustee McCurdy, seconded by Vice-Chairman Hile.

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 *Appointment of Interim General Manager, Martin Glaze*.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Better Bus Stop Campaign

Interim General Manager Glaze stated the infrastructure has been installed at the 16 stops completed last month; putting out simme seats; lights; and shelters. For FY2021, there are 30 stops that are still pending with the Town. In an update this morning, Lewis Yockey & Brown received the comments and requests for revisions for the 30 stops, which is normal procedure and adjustments will be made and resubmitted for the permitting. Once that is complete, they will go out for bid. The Wesley West stop on Washington Street has been approved by the City and the required *Easement* has been signed. Hopefully, we can get this stop constructed within the next month. As discussed at our last Board Meeting, a request has been made to the City to use TIF funding for the bus stops on IAA Drive. He stated that he is also working with the engineers there about safety requirements such as crosswalks

and the engineers will be working with Dave White, Connect's Safety Director and will get me a quote on what they believe this will cost. Once we have that the City Staff will handle it from there unless he receives further direction from them. One thing to note is that our partnerships with the City and Town continue to pay off. The City of Bloomington did construct two (2) bus stops during the Clinton Blvd/Emerson sidewalk work. Two more are in the construction area.

Chairman Whitehouse thanked Mr. Tyus for his assistance in helping Connect complete these bus stops.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Trustee McCurdy welcomed Deb Presley to the Board and welcomed the life experience she is bringing to this Board and her perspective as having served with the CTF Working Group as well.

ADJOURNMENT

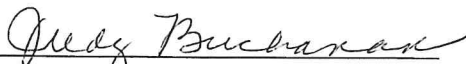
Chairman Whitehouse entertained a *Motion to Adjourn*, moved by Trustee McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

Rollcall vote:

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

NAY: None.

Motion carried and the regular monthly Board meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.


Trustee Judy Buchanan, Secretary


Jill Baxter, Board Clerk

