

**CONNECT TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES – MAY 26, 2020**

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

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held on May 26, 2020 at 4:30 p.m. at Connect Transit in the training room with Board Members participating in the meeting virtually.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Chairman Mike McCurdy  
Vice Chairman Ryan Whitehouse  
Secretary Monica Bullington  
Trustee Judy Buchanan  
Trustee Julie Hile  
Trustee Linda Foster

CITY MANAGERS: Town of Normal Manager Pam Reece – Present  
Bloomington City Manager Tim Gleason - Absent

STAFF PRESENT: General Manager, Isaac Thorne  
Jill Baxter, Board Clerk

The May monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was called to order by Chairman Mike McCurdy at 4:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no public comments.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Approval of Minutes of April 28, 2020 Public Hearing; 2020 Annual Meeting; and April 28, 2020 Board meeting
2. Disbursements for the month of April 2020
3. Monthly Statistical Report for April 2020
4. Cardinal Infrastructure Federal Report

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

AYE: All.  
NAY: None.

There was no discussion and the Board voted to approve the *Consent Agenda*.

**NEW BUSINESS**

*Recommendation of "One Rate for All" Fare Structure, Better Bus Stop Campaign, and Expansion of Connect Mobility Service Area*

General Manager Thorne stated these recommendations were recommended by the Connect to the Future Working Group and supported by the Board of Trustees in February. Staff has already begun working on the Better Bus Stop Campaign for FY2021 and plans are being developed for 90 bus stops.

Chairman McCurdy asked the Board for a Motion on the *Recommendation of "One Rate for All" Fare Structure, Better Bus Stop Campaign, and Expansion of Connect Mobility Service Area*, moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Trustee Foster.

**DISCUSSION**

Trustee Whitehouse stated that the Board has always been about our customers and making certain the system runs the right way for our customers and all of the concluded *Recommendations* from the Working Group is something that as a system we should be proud of.

Trustee Buchanan added that one of the comments from the Working Group members repeatedly was that they were very proud of their work and this *Recommendation* is reflective of their dedication.

Chairman McCurdy agreed with the comments and stated that if anything says that we are customer service centric, it is the CttF Working Group itself and the work they did in responding to customer complaints and addressing all those concerns.

Trustee Foster added that she had the opportunity to be a part of CttF and stated that the CttF members were from different parts of the community. We had different areas of concerns that were able to be addressed and we came out of those meetings with a better understanding and bringing to the forefront issues that needed to be dealt with and there was no hesitation in addressing them. We believe this is a result of all of that put together.

Trustee Bullington stated that we needed to go the route taken and believes that it means so much more having the community support behind it.

Trustee Hile wanted to add what we learned is an important process lesson from this experience and asked that we keep the CttF members close in so far as they have become advocates for the system and they have seen the challenges for the community. If we end up with no one attending our community engagement sessions, she hoped that rather than just proceeding, that we take a step back and think about methods and make certain that we have received the community input that we

absolutely need on these kinds of changes and believed that the Working Group members can help Connect Transit achieve this.

General Manager Thorne interjected that Connect has held two (2) community engagement sessions over these *Recommendations* amid COVID-19 but didn't receive any attendance to those sessions. We did our best to educate the community in advance of the community engagement sessions.

Chairman McCurdy added that prior to COVID-19, there was certainly a lot of outreach to the community but not a lot of response. We held dozens of meeting regarding some of the past proposals. Agreeing with Trustee Hile, he stated that it is worth a brain-storming session to figure out how we can better reach the members of the public and our customers.

Trustee Buchanan reminded all of the Board Members that "increased community engagement" was one of the CttF's recommendations and this would be a good time to engage the Group again as they worked very hard and were dedicated in making this happen for Connect.

There was no further discussion.

AYE: All.

NAY: None.

Motion carried and the *Recommendation of "One Rate for All" Fare Structure, Better Bus Stop Campaign, and Expansion of Connect Mobility Service Area* was approved by the Board.

#### *Recommendation of FY2021 Operating and Capital Budget*

General Manager Thorne introduced the *Recommendation of FY2021 Operating and Capital Budget*. The Board held a Work Session on this item last week to discuss the Operating and Capital Budget. He asked the Board to approve the FY2021 Operating and Capital Budget. This is the exact document that was discussed last week and no changes were made coming out of that Work Session. We do have different scenarios but there is still a lot up in the air in terms of our revenue streams from IDOT. What Staff plans to do is to keep the Board updated on our progress month-by-month and we may have to revise it. Again, reminding the Board that it will have to go through IDOT's approval.

Chairman Mike McCurdy asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation of FY2021 Operating and Capital Budget*, moved by Trustee Bullington, seconded by Trustee Whitehouse.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Trustee Whitehouse commented that the monthly reports are going to be important and back to the prior conversation regarding community input and local officials' input, his fear is that with the General Assembly stating a revenue loss of \$2.6B in this period of the pandemic, we need to be prepared and look farther down the road so we do not have to make changes to those resources that might be more limited or cut from the Downstate Operating Assistance Program.



Trustee Hile agreed that this situation warrants an underscoring of the cautions that Trustee Whitehouse has stated. We will have to make a very strong effort to stay tuned-in month-to-month and need to be communicating with the public, the Councils, the Mayors and City Managers.

Chairman McCurdy commended the staff for putting together a budget with so many unknowns.

AYE: All.  
NAY: None.

Motion carried and the *Recommendation of FY2021 Operating and Capital Budget* was approved by the Board.

#### *Recommendation of FY2021 Health Insurance Renewal*

General Manager Thorne stated that costs this year will increase 5.98% and the Dental and Vision insurance is paid by employees. The last two (2) renewals for Connect Transit have had increases of 4.2% and 5.46%.

Chairman Mike McCurdy asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation of FY2021 Health Insurance Renewal*, moved by Trustee Foster, seconded by Trustee Buchanan.

#### **DISCUSSION**

There was no discussion.

AYE: All.  
NAY: None.

Motion carried and the *Recommendation of FY2021 Health Insurance Renewal* was approved by the Board.

#### *Recommendation of FY2021 Property and Casualty Insurance Renewal*

General Manager Thorne stated that this renewal covers the following insurance coverage: workers' compensation, property, crime, general liability, automotive liability, automotive comprehensive, umbrella, directors' and officers' errors and omissions coverage, employment practices liability coverage, employee benefits liability coverage, and cyber liability insurance. The total cost of renewal is \$524,921, a 4.1% increase over FY2020.

Chairman Mike McCurdy asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation of FY2021 Property and Casualty Insurance Renewal*, moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Chairman McCurdy.

**DISCUSSION**

Trustee Whitehouse stated that there is really nothing Connect can do to prevent increases but would encourage communication with our lobbyist about Workers' Compensation issues.

Trustee Buchanan stated that she would like to see quarterly updates on Workers' Compensation.

General Manager Thorne stated that we can do better by getting employees that are on Workers' Compensation back to work on light duty. Those types of policies are where we need to do better. In response to a question, General Manager Thorne indicated that at the next meeting he will supply the Board with a quarterly report on Workers' Compensation.

AYE: All.

NAY: None.

Motion carried and the *Recommendation of FY2021 Health Insurance Renewal* was approved by the Board.

***Recommendation for Suspension of Fare Collection***

General Manager Thorne stated that staff is monitoring fare collection daily regarding when Connect should begin again to collect fares. Much of this depends upon where we are in the Governor's phases and where we are in our local economy. As discussed at the Work Session, Connect will have to start collecting fares again as it returns to regular service. He asked the Board for a *Recommendation for Suspension of Fare Collection* and reduced service until July 5, 2020.

Chairman Mike McCurdy asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation for Suspension of Fare Collection*, moved by Trustee Whitehouse, seconded by Trustee Bullington.

**DISCUSSION**

Trustee Foster inquired about the status of the proposed barriers on each bus.

General Manager Thorne stated that before we continue any fare collection, Connect will place "sneeze-guards" on all of its buses. The plan right now is to have all of those installed by the middle or end of June. Some have been ordered (22) from the manufacturer and some will be retrofitted on the 2003 New Fliers and the 2011 Gillig buses. We should be ready with those in place by the end of June.

Trustee Hile asked the General Manager to keep the Board informed as he collaborates with the Town and the City on the thresholds by which we re-open.

There was no further discussion.

AYE: All.  
NAY: None.

Motion carried and the *Recommendation for Suspension of Fare Collection* was approved by the Board.

#### 2019 Annual Performance Review and Compensation for the General Manager

Chairman Mike McCurdy stated that Trustees will recall the Board met in *Executive Session* regarding the General Manager's performance and his compensation package and we are now bringing that to a vote by the Board. The Chairman asked for a *Motion* on the *Recommendation of 2019 Annual Performance Review and Compensation for the General Manager*, moved by Trustee Hile, seconded by Trustee Whitehouse.

AYE: All.  
NAY: None.

Motion carried and the *2019 Annual Performance Review and Compensation for the General Manager* was approved by the Board.

#### **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT**

##### Better Bus Stops Update

General Manager Thorne stated that Connect has completed two (2) stops in May and have 22 more stops ready for construction and six (6) are pending which need executed *Easement Agreements*. Lewis Yockey & Brown are preparing the site designs for FY2021. We are still waiting on IDOT to provide its concurrence to issue the bid for construction for FY2021 bus stops. We are making really good progress and all will need to go to the City and Town and IDOT for permitting. We are hoping that we can have all 22 ready for construction to be completed this fiscal year, depending on the weather.

Trustee Buchanan asked for an update on the State working with Connect on the Route 9 stops.

General Manager Thorne stated that IDOT is going to be resurfacing Route 9 and they are working with us. We have given them the plans to make the needed updates on all of the stops in that area. They are taking the lead and are going to update the stops as part of their process to resurface Route 9/Empire Street. We do not have a timeframe yet but MCRPC is in current discussions, but I am uncertain what IDOT's schedule will be on that project.

##### Future Agenda Items

General Manager Thorne stated that on the monthly General Manager's report he will be adding a topic of "future agenda items" to make the Board aware in advance of what we will be discussing over the next few months. Future items right now are the addition of bus shelters; acquisition of simme

seats; and recommendations of ISU and Heartland’s bus service contracts. These will all come in front of the Board in short order.

**ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR SESSION**

Chairman Mike McCurdy entertained a *Motion for Adjournment* to move into *Executive Session*.

Trustee Bullington moved to adjourn regular session to move into *Executive Session*, seconded by Trustee Foster.

AYE: All.  
NAY: None.

Motion carried, and the Board of Trustees adjourned regular session and moved into *Executive Session* at 4:55 p.m.

**REGULAR SESSION CONTINUED**

Chairman McCurdy called regular session back to order at 4:55 p.m. Roll call was taken.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Chairman Mike McCurdy  
Vice Chairman Ryan Whitehouse  
Secretary Monica Bullington  
Trustee Judy Buchanan  
Trustee Julie Hile  
Trustee Linda Foster

CITY MANAGERS: Town of Normal Manager Pam Reece – Present  
Bloomington City Manager Tim Gleason - Absent

STAFF PRESENT: General Manager, Isaac Thorne  
Jill Baxter, Board Clerk

Chairman McCurdy stated that no action will be taken on releasing Executive Session Minutes as reviewed at this time.

**TRUSTEE’S COMMENTS**

Trustees discussed the location of the next meeting and concluded that if necessary, the next monthly meeting could be held in the Town of Normal’s Council Chambers.

ADJOURNMENT OF REGULAR SESSION

Chairman McCurdy entertained a *Motion to Adjourn* regular session, moved by Trustee Buchanan, seconded by Trustee Foster.

AYE: All.  
NAY: None.

Motion carried and the regular monthly Board meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

  
Secretary Monica Bullington

  
Jill Baxter – Board Clerk

