

CONNECT TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES– JULY 23, 2019

351 Wylie Drive – Board Room #135
Normal, Illinois 61761

The July regular monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at 4:30 p.m. in the Board Room of Connect Transit located at 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, Illinois 61761.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Chairman Mike McCurdy
Secretary Monica Bullington
Trustee John Bowman
Trustee Judy Buchanan

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Vice Chairman Ryan Whitehouse
Trustee Julie Hile

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

STAFF PRESENT: General Manager, Isaac Thorne
Jill Bower, Board Clerk
Martin Glaze, Chief Operations Officer
Shelly Perry, Operations Manager
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
Cassie Mosier, Procurement Specialist
Brady Lange, Maintenance Manager
Jeff Holtke, Marketing Manager
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

The monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was called to order by Chairman Mike McCurdy at 4:33 p.m. Roll call was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of June 25, 2019 Board Meeting and the Special Meeting of the Board of Trustees held on July 9, 2019
2. Disbursements for the month of June 2019
3. Capital and Self Insurance Reserve Fund Balances for month of June 2019

4. Monthly Statistical Report for month of June 2019

Chairman McCurdy called for a *Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda*. Trustee Judy Buchanan moved to approve the *Consent Agenda*, seconded by Trustee Monica Bullington.

DISCUSSION

As noted by the Isaac Thorne, General Manager, the income statement for July 2019 was not included in the Board Packet due to closing out FY2018-2019. Board Members discussed ridership with the General Manager and Staff regarding the PINK, RED EX and LIME EX routes, and the regular LIME and RED routes, including dwell time.

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

AYE: All
NAY: None

Motion carried, and the *Consent Agenda* was approved by the Board.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of the IDOT Downstate Operating Assistance Program Contract

Chairman McCurdy asked the Board for a Motion for approval. Trustee John Bowman moved to approve the *IDOT Downstate Operating Assistance Program Contract*, seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan.

Board Members discussed prior DOAP Contracts in comparison and noted that approximately \$4M is left on the table due to lack of local funds. Additional questions from the Board were how DOAP money would be applied and Staff explained that options are included by an *Amendment* and not locked into use in the current fiscal year. General Manager Thorne stated that Connect has never used the total allocation from IDOT and added that a main concern is Connect may not receive the 10% statutory increase.

AYE: All.
NAY: None.

The *IDOT Downstate Operating Assistance Program Contract* was approved by the Board.

Recommendation of Maintenance Building Shower Room Construction Contract

General Manager Thorne stated that Connect received two (2) bids: (i) P.J. Hoerr; and (ii) J. Spencer Construction and the lowest bidder was P.J. Hoerr. Continuing, he stated that over the last several years Connect has experienced incidents where employees would be splashed with harmful and hazardous chemicals while working on vehicles which required employees to travel home to shower and change work clothes and then return to work. Connect is recommending to the Board that showers be added and bathrooms reconstructed in the Maintenance Building to accommodate a safer working environment for Connect's Maintenance mechanics and all Maintenance employees who work in the Maintenance Building. General Manager Thorne added that the largest cost of the renovations would be cutting of the concrete floors to install the new plumbing.

Chairman Mike McCurdy asked the Board for a Motion for approval. Trustee John Bowman moved to approve the *Recommendation of Maintenance Building Shower Room Construction Contract*, seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan.

AYE: All.
NAY: None.

The Motion carried and the *Recommendation of Maintenance Building Shower Room Construction Contract* was approved by the Board.

Recommendation of FY2020 Marketing Plan

Chairman McCurdy stated that since WGLT will be involved in the FY2020 Marketing Plan, he will abstain from voting and recommended that this *Recommendation* be carried over to the next Board Meeting.

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Trustee Monica Bullington.

AYE: All.
NAY: None.

Recommendation to Delay Fixed Route and Connect Mobility Fare Increase to January 1, 2020

Chairman McCurdy ask for a Motion, Trustee Monica Bullington moved to approve the *Recommendation to Delay Fixed Route and Connect Mobility Fare Increase to January 1, 2020*, seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan.

The Board asked about the financial impact to Connect and General Manager Thorne stated that the loss this quarter – not counting the months of July-October - would be \$22,975; estimating \$46,000 used in Section 5307 funding to fill the gap based on budgeted numbers for the next six (6) months.

AYE: All.
NAY: None.

Motion carried and the *Recommendation to Delay Fixed Route and Connect Mobility Fare Increase to January 1, 2020* was approved.

Recommendation of Service Vehicle Replacements

General Manager Thorne stated Connect Transit has four (4) service vehicles past their useful life and need replacement. Connect will be able to use the State of Illinois Master Contract to purchase the service vehicles from the State Master Contract in which the State of Illinois has awarded to Morrow Brothers Ford, Inc. The joint purchasing program allows Illinois agencies to purchase vehicles that have already been approved as the lowest bidder. Connect will apply \$64,948 of IDOT DOAP Debt Service funds; \$20,000 of FTA Section 5307 funds; and \$14,792 of Local Capital Funds. General Manager Thorne asked the Board to approve the purchase of four (4) replacement vehicles in the amount of \$99,920.

Chairman McCurdy ask for a Motion, Trustee Judy Buchanan moved to approve the *Recommendation of Service Vehicle Replacements*, seconded by Trustee Monica Bullington.

Board Members asked what the general life of a service vehicle should be and how will Connect dispose the vehicles from the fleet? General Manager Thorne responded the life of a service vehicle is about five (5) years. The service vehicles for replacement have average mileage of 88,000-94,0000 and disposal of the retired service vehicles would be sold on a government website specifically for government auction, limiting the listing at \$5,000 as three of the four were purchased with Federal Funding.

AYE: All.
NAY: None.

Motion carried and the *Recommendation of Service Vehicle Replacements* was approved.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

FY2019 Strategic Plan Update

YEAR TWO OBJECTIVES (not in order of importance):

- Design or adjust proposed system routes to ensure alignment with and performance toward transit objectives. (Strategic Plan Goal 1, Strategy 2, Action 1)

Staff partnered with *Mclean County Regional Planning Commission* (MCRPC) on a short-range transportation plan. MCRPC presented the proposed short-range transportation plan to the Connect Transit Board in May.

This plan provided recommendations on service enhancements and partnerships that should be explored to increase ridership and data reporting.

- Explore fare restructuring (Strategic Plan Goal 1, Strategy 4, Action 3)

Staff proposed a new fare structure that includes FY2020 through FY2023. The Board approved a new fare structure.

- Build a Downtown Transfer Center (Strategic Plan Goal 2, Strategy 1, Action 1)

Connect has met with City of Bloomington staff and determined a few potential locations that can be reviewed for the study. Connect has executed the Contract for Grant Funds and is awaiting IDOT approval on pre-bid procurement documents.

Awarded \$3,000,000 for the Downtown Transfer Center in the State of Illinois Capital Program.

- Examine all existing revenue sources for stability and growth potential, and research new/alternative revenue streams for operations and capital (Strategic Plan Goal 1, Strategy 4, Action 1)

Staff submitted a Bus and Bus Facilities Discretionary Grant application for \$500,000, to improve bus stops and provide additional capital funding.

The Marketing Department generated \$97,000 in advertising revenue. This is the highest amount of advertising revenue generated since the advertising program was approved.

Staff has successfully implemented the Medicaid Program for qualifying trips. There have been delays with the Medicaid Program due to State regulations and customers being switched out of the State program and into Managed Care Organizations (MCO) but Connect generated \$17,500 of revenue in fiscal year 2019.

In May and June there was a change made to the First Transit site that caused trips to be denied. Connect is currently in the process of rebilling and recouping the revenue for as many of those trips as possible in July. Because the approval process is time sensitive, staff adjusted tracking and follow-up process on trip approval requirements. This adjustment is more proactive and will make the approval process for each trip timelier.

Quite a few of the frequent and prospective customers either had or were being switched to one of the main MCOs, called Molina. Staff started the approval process and is currently in the end stages of being able to accept Molina. Once approved Connect will start billing out trips for customers who were switched from the State to Molina.

- Heighten awareness about placement of land uses requiring high levels of service, the necessity of mobility options, and the value of sidewalks, shelters and other amenities (Goal 5, Strategy 3, Action 4)

Staff conducted an "accessibility review" to prioritize improved pedestrian connections, bus stops pads, shelters, and signage. Staff continues to meet with City and Town Engineering Departments to discuss bus stop improvements. Staff brought a *Recommendation* to the Board of Trustees for fifty-three (53) engineered site plans.

Over the last seven (7) months Connect has improved 15 bus stops. Site plans are being completed for 53 bus stops and these bus stops are to be completed in FY2020.

Staff also continues to meet with businesses, hospitals, and agencies to discuss bus stop improvements and the value of sidewalks.

- Ensure all riders are aware of the freedom and flexibility afforded by the fixed route system (Goal 2, Strategy 3, Action 4)

The Connect Transit Marketing Department has continued to record various videos highlighting different aspects of riding on Connect Transit. These cover how to use the bike rack, how to exit the bus, how to claim lost and found items and various other videos including; the incorporation of the three local university mascots from ISU, IWU and HCC. They continue to share our "Why such large buses?" video. This video featured a time-lapse of a typical day on a Connect Transit bus. Staff is also conducting frequent Facebook LIVE videos to service changes and general updates about the system. These Facebook videos will be available on select social media channels.

A formal training program for fixed routes has been developed and branded as *ConnectU*. *ConnectU* has been conducted for several groups in the community and provides the basics of riding. To date, staff has held seven (7) different *ConnectU* events and have gotten in front of at least two hundred (200) potential riders, many who had never ridden the bus before.

- Vividly portray the way transit benefits sales and commerce. Transports our workforces, facilitates individual's livelihoods and can diversify the region's employer/employee base (Goal 5, Strategy 2, Action 2)

Staff has discussed the economic impact study with *Illinois State University Stevenson Center*. The economic impact study would focus on the following:

- Travel Time/Cost Impacts: Both Connect Transit riders and car travelers save time and cost because of the existence of transit services
- Access Impacts: Worker's income and business productivity are increased by the expanded job market access and business clusters that public transit enables
- Spending Impacts: Transit capital investment and operations spending stimulates the economy
- Other Economic Impacts: Transit service can affect property values

He stated that he has been in contact with the *Illinois State University Stevenson Center* and is currently waiting for a Contract for the Economic Impact Study.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Chairman McCurdy inquired as to the number of bus stops (maximum) Connect can improve in 1 year? General Manager Thorne responded by stating that if sidewalks are already in place, etc., around 50-60 a year and over the next two (2) years, Connect expects to install another 120. However, that still leaves approximately 500 and estimated that Connect is on-target with approximately 1/3 of the goal as set out in the *Better Bus Stops Campaign*, noting that currently 70 stops are still without sidewalks and will have to be tackled after those are installed.

Trustee Judy Buchanan asked for an approximate timeframe for funding. General Manager Thorne stated that there is always a delay in the announcement of the award and the actual "receipt" of the money through the Grant process and usually, the process takes about 3-4 months for FTA to notify those who are awarded.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Mike McCurdy entertained a *Motion for Adjournment*.

Trustee Monica Bullington moved to adjourn, seconded by Trustee John Bowman.

AYE: All
NAY: None

Motion carried, and the Board of Trustees adjourned the July regular monthly meeting at 5:27 p.m.


Secretary Monica Bullington


Jill Bower – Board Clerk

