

CONNECT TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MINUTES– JUNE 25, 2019

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

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

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Chairman Mike McCurdy
Vice Chairman Ryan Whitehouse
Secretary John Bowman – late arrival 4:37 p.m.
Trustee Judy Buchanan
Trustee Monica Bullington
Trustee Julie Hile

CITY MANAGERS: Bloomington City Manager Tim Gleason - Present
Town of Normal Manager Pam Reece – Present – late arrival 4:38 p.m.

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
Brendan O’Neill, Community Outreach Coordinator
Julie Dockham, Human Resources Director

The 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 was one (1) public comment by Connie Kelly.

Ms. Kelly commented that she believed that Connect Mobility’s fare capping was not getting the attention she thought it deserved. She continued by stating that both Bloomington and Normal want to be an inclusive community and that people with disabilities who use CM have limited options when it comes to transportation. She stated that there are issues still needing to be addressed as the affordable places to live are the furthest away from where many of the City’s and Town’s community events are held. Ms. Kelly stated that with the elimination of the 30-day pass, CM riders will see high

increases in their fares and will be paying much more to ride but are still not offered any fare capping like fixed route riders will receive. Ms. Kelly added that able-bodied riders who use fixed route will benefit from the fare capping and she believes this is unfair to the CM riders.

There were no additional public comments.

Chairman McCurdy asked for a *Motion* to move item *D.* of the *Agenda* until Trustee John Bowman arrives. *Motion* was made by Trustee Judy Buchanan to move item *D.* of the *Agenda*, seconded by Trustee Monica Bullington.

AYE: All.

NAY: None.

Motion passed to move item *D.* of the *Agenda* until Trustee Bowman arrived.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of May 28, 2019 Board Meeting which was rescheduled to be held on June 4, 2019
2. Disbursements for the month of May 2019
3. Financial Report for month of May 2019
4. Capital and Self Insurance Reserve Fund Balances for month of May 2019
5. Monthly Statistical Report for month of May 2019

Trustee Judy Buchanan stated that she had two (2) corrections to the *Minutes* of the June 4, 2019 Board Meeting of which one was on page 12 of the *Minutes* to correct one of the names of an expert which was incorrectly identified and the second correction was in the next paragraph of the *Minutes* in referencing a Facilitator, that stated "the individual will be a citizen of the Bloomington-Normal community" should have read "the individual may be a citizen of the Bloomington-Normal community."

Trustee John Bowman arrived at the meeting at 4:37 p.m.

Trustee Bowman asked for clarity on a \$22,000 item on the *Cash Disbursement Report* for proxy locks.

General Manager Thorne responded that this item was a Board-approved *Recommendation* and that Connect Transit will also be receiving reimbursement of \$15,500 from IDOT for the proxy locks.

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

DISCUSSION

Chairman McCurdy asked if there were any questions or comments by the Board.

Relative to the *Income Statement*, Trustee Judy Buchanan inquired whether Connect was on-target with State funding and asked when the next funding is due?

General Manager Thorne confirmed that Connect was on-target with State funding and that Connect has been getting quarterly reimbursements on-time, adding that Connect should receive the fifth payment in August.

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.

RECOGNITION OF SERVICE OF TRUSTEE JOHN BOWMAN - CONNECT TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

At this time Chairman Mike McCurdy recognized Trustee John Bowman for his two terms of service as a Connect Transit Board Trustee representing the City of Bloomington and was presented with a *Certificate of Service* thanking him for his service on the *Board*.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Recommendation of Mobile Ticketing

General Manager Isaac Thorne asked the Board to approve a *Contract Amendment* to Genfare for a period of three (3) years. In 2016 the Board of Trustees approved a *Contract* with Genfare for fareboxes and software. General Manager Thorne stated that Staff had discussed mobile ticketing solutions with five (5) different vendors.

Connect Transit's Procurement Specialist, Cassie Mosier and Connect Transit's Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, each spoke briefly about the positive points for the *Contract Amendment* with Genfare. In summary:

Genfare adjusted the total price by 30%, decreasing the cost. After performing due diligence with other interested vendors, Genfare still won out with the lowest price. The current Genfare contract ends in 1.5 years, which would prevent any mobile ticketing availability during that time. If approved by the Board, the *Amendment* would extend Connect's Contract with Genfare, to include mobile ticketing, for a period of three (3) years and Genfare could have mobile ticketing up and running within six (6) weeks.

The capability for fare capping was a priority when speaking with Genfare about mobile ticketing and since the original 2016 Contract, mobile prices have decreased due to the app being cheaper to host once developed. Other vendors did not have fare capping and/or only had variation(s). Regarding payment schedules, some vendors would take out transaction fees for a ticket purchase as the app was used, while others waited until the end of the month to charge fees. Genfare's mobile ticketing integrates well with the fareboxes and eliminates the bus driver's interaction for verification. Other mobile ticketing vendors show capabilities to integrate; however, requiring additional hardware on each bus. ISU's institutional ID program can be incorporated easily on upload.

Trustee John Bowman asked about the cost and whether this was in addition to the previously approved Contract?

General Manager Thorne stated that the total cost would be \$75,560 with 80% paid for by a Federal Grant allocated to Connect for mobile ticketing. This would mean a reduction in cost and additional savings from the original in-place Contract.

Vice Chairman Ryan Whitehouse asked if the cost of the app was included in the price and who will create the app?

Interim Chief Operations Officer, Martin Glaze, stated that a turn-key app has already been created with Connect's logo and when the fare structure is uploaded, the only other information Genfare would need to know would be passes, what increments, and after uploading the institutional IDs, it would be turn-key from there. Summarizing the procedure, every ticket purchase made through the app would be tracked and within a monthly period if a rider spends up to the cost of a 30-day pass, then the rider would be issued a 30-day pass and ride the rest of the month for free which allows someone to pay the same amount for the 30-day pass. However, the rider does not have to pay in a lump sum – but will pay for the pass over time.

Chairman McCurdy asked the Board for a Motion for approval. Trustee Ryan Whitehouse moved to approve the *Recommendation of Mobile Ticketing*, seconded by Trustee Monica Bullington.

AYE: All.

NAY: None.

The *Recommendation of Mobile Ticketing* was approved by the Board.

Recommendation of Connect to the Future Working Group Member

General Manager Thorne asked the Board to approve Jerry James as a Member of the *Connect to the Future* Working Group. Mr. James is a 22-year Air Force veteran and he retired from State Farm in 2015.

Chairman Mike McCurdy asked the Board for a Motion for approval. Trustee Judy Buchanan moved to approve the *Recommendation of Connect to the Future* Working Group Member, Jerry James, seconded by Trustee Julie Hile.

AYE: All.

NAY: None.

The Motion carried and the *Recommendation of Connect to the Future* Working Group Member, Jerry James, was approved by the Board.

Recommendation of Pink Route Deviation

General Manager Thorne asked the Board to approve a route adjustment on the Pink route. This adjustment would provide 30-minute service to West Orlando Avenue for those individuals who cannot travel to Main Street the ability to ride the Pink route.

The financial impact of the deviation of the Pink route would be cost neutral and would not increase service hours to the operating budget.

Martin Glaze, Connect Transit's Interim Chief Operations Officer presented a short summary of the proposed deviation of the Pink route to the Board. In summary:

- Driver-tested and approved
- Driver recovery time will not be jeopardized
- On-time performance
- Cost neutral to serve residents of Orlando-Northbrook area
- 93% of the Olive route would be covered by the Pink route deviation
- Remaining 7% is along Ft. Jesse/Beach Street area
 - Beach Street is 4 blocks away from the Pink
 - Ft. Jesse is 8 blocks away from the Red
- Service will only be provided on a Northbound trip
- Pink will perform its normal route and cut over on Orlando; loop around in the Northbrook Estates; utilizing the Northbrook Estates stop and the Bayberry Village stop
- Back to Orlando up to Lincoln Square and back
- Frequency: 30-minutes
- Increase service in Orlando/Northbrook area from once per hour to every 30 minutes

DISCUSSION

Trustee John Bowman stated that the fare revenue of the Olive route is equal or exceeds several the other routes in the system on an hourly basis, while it may have a cost to it - there is also a piece that

shows it performs well in fare recovery. Trustee Bowman asked Mr. Glaze if that was considered in the equation for the Pink route deviation?

Mr. Glaze stated at such a low number, it did not offset the inefficiency of the route.

Trustee Bowman mentioned that in July 2018, the Pink route shows revenue of \$110,472 and the Olive route shows \$99,834, generating more dollars per rider on the Olive route than the Pink route.

Trustee Ryan Whitehouse stated that the ridership was higher on the Pink route.

General Manager Thorne stated that all transit is subsidized and the full amount is not always recovered.

Trustee Bowman believed the cost of a trip is misrepresented on fixed routes because of transfers as the expense is more, compared to CM, for example, that becomes much less a disparity. Trustee Bowman continued by stating that numbers do matter and all the numbers need to be examined, stating that he believed all numbers should be taken into consideration and it should have been done.

Trustee Bowman asked if any alternative routings were looked at for the service from the Pink, i.e., continue School Street to McKnight and take it over to Bradford back down to Raab, across to Northbrook down into Orlando/Northbrook, making that a turn-around and coming back the same way? Continuing, he stated that would be more consistent with the Comprehensive Analysis routing principles which are supposed to drive routing and planning decisions in the system.

General Manager Thorne responded that this is a compromise and your route suggestion cannot be done symmetrically.

Trustee Bowman stated it would be more symmetrical than what you are proposing here.

Trustee Ryan Whitehouse stated that it would be. However, listening to our customers, citizens, both Bloomington Council and Normal Council, there is concern about providing service to that area and he believed this would offer a good compromise.

Trustee Bowman reiterated his earlier question whether an alternate deviation was considered and ruled out.

General Manager Thorne stated the specific alternate route offered by Trustee Bowman was not considered.

After Chairman McCurdy asked for comments from Staff regarding Trustee Bowman's alternative route suggestion, Mr. Glaze stated that it is efficient cost-wise and where the ridership is located. The ridership on the Pink is where the housing complexes are as it loops around. However, the individuals on the east side would still have to get over to the west side. Mr. Glaze added that as the General Manager said, it is a compromise and is not going to fully follow the guidelines.

Chairman McCurdy added that the guiding principle were just that and were not laws. We should look at trying to follow them as often and as seriously as possible, but occasionally there would be good reasons to deviate, i.e., the Shellbourne Apartments closing or the opportunity to serve Orlando/Northbrook, those riders who are not able to walk to the Yellow stop, in his opinion would be an appropriate reason.

Trustee Whitehouse reiterated this was driver tested and approved by the drivers.

Trustee Bowman asked to see what the drivers say about an alternate to the proposed Pink route deviation.

Chairman McCurdy stated that the proposal on the floor is the Pink route deviation and Trustee Bowman can either vote yay or nay.

Trustee Monica Bullington asked Mr. Glaze a question whether we will need to be worried in winter with some of the areas covered with snow? Continuing Trustee Bullington stated if there is uncertainty with on-time performance of the Pink deviation, what about snow cover? Continuing, Trustee Bullington asked also if Staff knew what the difference in summer and winter concerning the schedules and does it effect on-time performance?

Mr. Glaze stated that yes, there is some concern. With drivers giving the go-ahead and blessing the deviation, Staff feels comfortable that the schedule will be maintained. Answering Trustee Bullington's second question, Mr. Glaze stated that it depends on the roads and that road is very wide and does not usually cause many problems which is one of the benefits of routes staying on the larger roads.

Trustee Ryan Whitehouse moved to approve the *Recommendation of Pink Route Deviation*, seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan.

There were no additional questions or comments.

AYE: Chairman McCurdy; Trustee Whitehouse; Trustee Buchanan; Trustee Bullington; Trustee Hile
NAY: Trustee Bowman

The Motion carried and the *Recommendation of Pink Route Deviation* was approved by the Board.

Chairman McCurdy added that this was a pilot project and would be re-evaluated within what time frame?

Mr. Glaze stated that in approximately six (6) months, the deviation of the Pink route would be evaluated and the weather in winter months could pose a problem to maintaining schedule, but at this point we do not believe that would be the case and the only concern would be that weather delays need to be closely monitored.

Trustee Whitehouse reiterated this is a compromise that the Board wants to see as successful and all the routes are continually reviewed for success. He added that he would like both Councils and the public to understand this was a good faith effort to try to find a solution to that specific area and as with every other route, with the data Staff provides to the Board, we are constantly reviewing.

Chairman McCurdy added that review includes the Olive route.

Trustee Bullington inquired what to expect communication-wise to customers and rolling it out with marketing.

General Manager Thorne stated that an educational session has been scheduled and will be focused on the Pink route deviation and we would also be updating the rider's guide. Additional community sessions will also be held.

Trustee Hile suggested that we hold some Community Sessions directly in the area where the Pink route deviation is run.

Recommendation of Connect to the Future Working Group Facilitator

General Manager Isaac Thorne brought to the floor the *Recommendation of Connect to the Future Working Group Facilitator*. General Manager Thorne asked the Board to approve a contract with *Smart Growth America* ("SGA") as the facilitator with a Contract amount not to exceed \$53,425.00. SGA will provide facilitation of the Working Group with a combination of six (6) in-person and video conference meetings. Since 2014 SGA has worked in partnership with governors, State Departments of Transportation and other transportation providers to improve safety, create healthier-more livable neighborhoods; improve access to opportunities; and use limited transportation funds efficiently. The cost of the facilitation Contract will be paid through the local capital account.

Chairman McCurdy ask for a Motion, Trustee Ryan Whitehouse moved to approve the *Recommendation of Connect to the Future Working Group Facilitator*, seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan.

Trustee Whitehouse stated he was looking forward to what SGA will find and bring back to the Board and appreciate the conversations with both Councils and their concerns to have answers.

Trustee Bowman asked if the SGA was to assist the Board in communicating with the public as the Board does not seem to have a great track record with the public? What is the purpose of the facilitator as it seems like a lot of money to pay? The Board talks about financial concerns of the system so how do we justify the expenditure? What does the Board anticipate deriving from the facilitator?

General Manager Thorne stated that the Board wanted to catch the dialog of the community on what is happening for transportation and the facilitator recommended has transportation experience not only across the United States but working with Governors, DOTs and the FTA, facilitating and capturing the comments from working groups from members of the agencies themselves and that is what we are

hoping to capture. This is a unique opportunity to have this discussion about transportation of where we are today and where we want to be in 5-10 years from now.

Trustee Julie Hile added that the broad experience that SGA brings to the table will also help us to a balanced perspective in leading the discussions and is a very important issue for this community and what we stand to gain strips this investment and the return will be very strong. Adding that there is a lot riding on this Working Group and we would like to see the work well supported by a disinterested third party who has strong transportation experience. SGA has experience finding funding which is an issue the system needs and is a very important part of this.

Trustee Judy Buchanan added that the creation of the Working Group is a good opportunity but is not a brand new idea and ultimately could provide the system with not only improved communication by bringing people together but to have a neutral and objective individual to put all of this together. The Working Group needs a person who comes in with experience but who is objective to help lead the group.

Trustee Monica Bullington added that she would like to know where this money is coming from.

General Manager Thorne stated that the money to pay for the facilitator would be coming from the local capital account. However, both the City and Town have been asked for a financial contribution to help pay for this consultant.

Both the Town of Normal City Manager and the City of Bloomington Manager agreed that the City and Town want this process to be effective and successful in leading the group forward.

Trustee John Bowman added a similar study was performed in 2011-2012 involving community leaders and asked the Board to look at that before the Board starts reinventing wheels. Adding that he felt the Board could have accomplished much of the same thing by listening to the voice of the community about the cost and the aggravation the Board will incur with the facilitator.

Trustee Ryan Whitehouse commented that it is unfair that the Board continues to be accused of not listening to the public because there is a difference of opinion. Continuing, Trustee Whitehouse stated that it is his job as a Trustee was to make certain the financial stability of Connect Transit is maintained. As a Board we look at routes to make certain they are sustainable for the long-term for the public and is unfair to have the Board's motives questioned, our intelligence questioned, and be told over and over that the Board is not listening because it arrives at a different opinion than other Board members. The Board works hard to try to give the public the best solutions that are out there.

Chairman McCurdy added that this is one of the reasons the Working Group needs a facilitator, someone who helps guide the meetings to assist the group in a successful conclusion, adding that he believed it is imperative to add a facilitator as the issues the Board is looking at today is more than the Olive route, more than the Pink deviation, and involves more than the fare increase which was approved, as it involves a possible structural deficit that could mean that the system footprint could shrink substantially in 2024.

Trustee Judy Buchanan added the Board needed to look at the entire system as the Board has heard a lot of input and concern of particular riders and phases of the operation, it is much larger than that. As Chairman of the *Connect to the Future* Working Group, we have worked very hard to put together a cross-section of the community in terms of the geography, rideability, mobility, fixed routes, businesses, and funding stakeholders because we have already had some very good input from one segment, taking that – hear it well and magnify it all across all the other segments of the operation and that is what the Working Group intends to do.

Trustee Bullington added that the report just received from the MCRPC indicates that the system is on-track for a number of issues which were confirmed by the report but there are still missing pieces. She thinks of the new Working Group is the missing piece of community members is the human part because we have all of the data. The Board has a lot of good information but the community is telling us we still have issues to work on and the impartiality of the facilitator she believed was needed.

Chairman McCurdy added that Connect is a good system but not a perfect system and there is always room for improvement. The Working Group will look at the *Short-range Transportation Plan*, the budget, Connect's *Strategic Plan*, the *Comprehensive Analysis*, projecting into the future about what kind of transit system this community wants and deserves and will make those recommendations to the Board.

Trustee Buchanan added - as well as looking at other places who have been in our position and have made progress by changing things or rearranged or done something to improve and we intend to seek those out and look at them as well.

Trustee Julie Hile stated that the Working Group has intentionally populated the Working Group with a diverse set of perspectives. She believed that the effort to coalesce many other efforts that have gone before – all the source documents – and putting them in front of a diverse group of people from the community such that their recommendations and outcomes of this effort is a coalition endorsement and people will be heard and considered and the Working Group will drive to a consensus as best it possibly can.

Trustee Bullington added that she was not taking the cost of the facilitator lightly and still would expect contributions from the City and Town but believes this is an investment in our future.

There was no further discussion.

AYE: Trustee McCurdy; Trustee Ryan Whitehouse; Trustee Judy Buchanan; Trustee Monica Bullington; Trustee Julie Hile

NAY: Trustee Bowman

Motion carried and the *Recommendation of the Connect to the Future Working Group Facilitator* was approved.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Changes in Prevailing Wage Ordinance Effective June 1, 2019

General Manager Thorne stated that effective June 1, 2019, Connect Transit is no longer required to approve an annual Prevailing Wage Ordinance each June. The prevailing wage schedule published on the *Illinois Department of Labor's* website will automatically set the applicable wage rates for each local government.

Bus and Bus Facility Grant

General Manager Thorne stated that Connect applied for *Section 5339 - Bus and Bus Facilities Grant* again this year and sent the application on Friday, June 21, 2019. This is a discretionary Federal Grant that is very competitive with transit agencies across the United States. Connect applied for a \$500,000 to apply to the *Better Bus Stops Campaign*. Notice of the awards of this specific grant opportunity will take place in October or November of this year.

ConnectU Update

General Manager Thorne turned the floor over to Jeff Holtke, Connect's Marketing Manager to update the Board on *ConnectU* training that has been taking place in the last few weeks.

Mr. Holtke stated that *ConnectU* program is about educating community members, young and old, and potential riders that have questions on how to ride. Mr. Holtke and Connect's Outreach Coordinator, Brendan O'Neill, drove the Community Bus to day-campers at *The History Museum* and also to *The Children's Museum* having some of the young campers riding along on the bus which gives Connect's Staff an opportunity to explain a little bit about the bus and then the campers get to see and ride the bus-in-motion, showing the campers the farebox and how to stop the bus if you want to get off. A little over 50 children participated in *ConnectU* over a period of 10-12 days. Mr. Holtke added that Staff uses the Community Bus quite often for various events to show people how the inside of the buses look and work. This helps Connect in getting families excited about riding public transportation.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Chairman Mike McCurdy added that to relieve pressure on the Working Group, asking to see if there was a consensus of the Board Members to ask Connect Staff to push the fare increase back to January 1st to give time for the Working Group to do the work it was formed to complete. The Board Members verbally consented to push the fare increase back to January 1, 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Trustee Judy Buchanan moved to adjourn, seconded by Trustee Monica Bullington.

AYE: All
NAY: None

Motion carried, and the Board of Trustees adjourned the regular monthly meeting at 5:40 p.m.



Jill Bower – Board Clerk



Trustee Monica Bullington - Secretary

