

Connect Transit Board of Trustees
November 25, 2025, 4:30 p.m.
351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL 61761 – Board Room
Regular Session Minutes – Approved at 1/27/26 Meeting

A. CALL TO ORDER:

Board Chair Julie Hile called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL:

Board Clerk, Janice Crago, recorded attendance via roll call.

Trustees Present:

Trustee Gina Bianchi
Vice Chair Judy Buchanan
Trustee Tyler Cravens
Secretary Linda Foster
Board Chair Julie Hile
Trustee Mandava Rao
Trustee Elicssha Sanders

Trustees Absent:

None

City Managers Present:

City Manager Jeff Jurgens
City Manager Pam Reece

City Managers Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director
Alex Giantamidis, Transit Planner
Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager
Charlie Busse, Maintenance Manager
Dave White, Safety & Training Coordinator
Janice Crago, Board Clerk
Jeff Manil, Service Delivery Manager
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

Guest(s) Present:

Mark Peterson
Ted Carlock, Connect Transit

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MISSION STATEMENT:

Secretary Foster, led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.
Board Chair Hile read the Connect Transit Mission Statement.

D. SAFETY MOMENT:

Board Chair Hile introduced this new agenda item, explaining that she had requested a safety moment be added to every agenda going forward and that Safety and Training Director, Dave White, would be leading this item beginning with our next meeting.

Board Chair Hile shared the importance of drivers following posted speed limits, driving safely, and not using devices where they shouldn't be. She followed up by thanking our drivers for following these posted speed limits and following Connect Transit policies.

E. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

F. CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. Approval of Minutes for October 28, 2025 – Regular Session
- b. Approval of Minutes for October 28, 2025 – Executive Session
- c. Approval of Financial Information for September 2025
- d. Approval of Financial Information for October 2025
- e. Monthly Statistical Reports for October 2025

Board Chair Hile called for a Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda.

Vice Chair Buchanan motioned; seconded by Secretary Foster

Discussion:

Board Chair Hile asked if we were clear to proceed with the motion on the floor or if Trustees had questions.

Trustees had no comments or questions.

Board Chair Hile called for a vote on the motion on the floor since there were no questions or comments and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster, Board Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

Consent Agenda was **approved**.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Recommendation for Enterprise Resource Planning Software.

Board Chair Hile called for a motion to authorize the Deputy Managing Director to execute a single-year license and maintenance contract with Avail Technologies, Inc. to provide our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software.

Trustee Rao motioned; seconded by Secretary Foster.

Discussion:

Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager, stated Connect Transit has been using FleetNet as our ERP software since 2012. In 2018 FleetNet was purchased by Avail Technologies (Avail). In 2022, Avail migrated the Enterprise Transit Management Software (ETMS), formerly known as FleetNet, from an on-premises locally stored solution to a software as a service (SaaS) cloud-based solution. Part of Avail's SaaS subscription cost includes cloud server space and the Microsoft Azure cloud

computing platform. We use Avail software to support the following departments: Human Resources, Finance, Transit Assets, Timekeeping, Payroll, and Scheduling.

This contract will begin on January 1, 2026, and continue through December 31, 2026. Because this contract is an extension of the service currently in place, this is considered a single source award. On February 27, 2024, the Board awarded a contract to Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) in partnership with three peer agencies to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) for replacement ERP software. The RFP was open till May 6, 2025. After that, the evaluation process began, and we received 10 proposals. We have completed three phases of the evaluation which are review of proposals, demonstrations, and discovery interviews. At this time, negotiations are not complete, and we will be bringing this recommendation to a later Board meeting.

Expenses associated with this single-year license and maintenance contract are \$74,997, which is a 2.8% increase (\$2,075) from last year. As in past years, Connect Transit will utilize operating funds for this contract, and this expense was included in our FY26 budget.

Trustee Sanders asked if we knew how much longer the negotiations would take.

Ms. Strupek stated she expected negotiations to end in the next few weeks and would bring the recommendation to the January Board meeting.

Board Chair Hile asked Ms. Strupek to explain the strategy of partnering with three agencies.

Ms. Strupek explained it was a procurement strategy because it is easier to work together with other agencies and combine information. One agency will implement the new software first, take note of best practices and share issues with the next agencies to implement the software.

Board Chair Hile asked what improvements we will see by going with this new ERP system.

Ms. Strupek explained we will have improved, streamlined human resources processes, payroll and time keeping will be more efficient, and we will have a smoother platform to operate from for all departments. Our IT Department will be able to clean up things that they haven't been able to for a long time with our current vendor and reports will be more customizable, among many other improvements.

Board Chair Hile asked if Trustees had any more questions or comments.

Trustees had no more comments or questions.

Board Chair Hile called for a vote on the motion on the floor since there were no more questions or comments and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster, Board Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

Motion to authorize the Deputy Managing Director to execute a single-year license and maintenance contract with Avail Technologies, Inc. to provide our Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software was **approved**.

b. Recommendation for Release of Closed Session Minutes.

Board Chair Hile called for a motion to continue to hold from release all confidential closed session minutes, and release or hold from release the closed session minutes as indicated in the recommendation.

Secretary Foster motioned; seconded by Vice Chair Buchanan.

Discussion:

Mr. Lange explained that Illinois State Law requires that all public bodies which are subject to the requirements of the Illinois Open Meetings Act review closed session minutes at least twice each calendar year to determine which of those minutes need to remain confidential and which can be released to the public. It is entirely up to the governing body to make the determination as to whether to release to the public any closed session minutes.

Staff has reviewed the closed session minutes in accordance with state statute and is recommending that all minutes previously held by the Board continue to be withheld from public release at this time due to the confidential nature of the items that were discussed during those closed session meetings. Staff further recommends the closed session minutes listed below be held from release due to their confidential nature, with the exception of the March 22, 2022, meeting. We propose the March 22, 2022, meeting minutes be released to the public.

Date	Topic	Reviewed	Decision	Release Date
6/3/2021	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	4/22/25	Hold	None
7/12/2021	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	4/22/25	Hold	None
2/22/2022	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) Property Acquisition	4/22/25	Hold	None
3/22/2022	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) Property Acquisition	4/22/25	Release	11/26/25
5/24/2022	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	4/22/25	Hold	None
10/25/2022	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters & 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) Property Acquisition	4/22/25	Hold	None
11/22/2022	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	4/22/25	Hold	None
9/26/2023	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	4/22/25	Hold	None
10/24/2023	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	4/22/25	Hold	None
4/24/2023	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) Property Acquisition	4/22/25	Hold	None
5/28/2024	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) Property Acquisition	4/22/25	Hold	None
9/24/2024	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	4/22/25	Hold	None
11/26/2024	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	4/22/25	Hold	None
2/25/25	5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters & 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(5) Setting Price of Real Estate	11/25/25	Hold	None
4/3/25	(5 ILCS 120/2.06) (d) – Rev. of Closed Session Minutes & 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	11/25/25	Hold	None

4/22/25	(5 ILCS 120/2.06) (d) – Rev. of Closed Session Minutes & 5 ILCS 120/2(c)(1) Personnel Matters	11/25/25	Hold	None
---------	---	----------	------	------

Board Chair Hile asked if the Trustees had any questions or comments.

Trustees had no comments or questions.

Board Chair Hile called for a vote on the motion on the floor since there were no questions or comments and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster, Board Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

Motion to continue to hold from release all confidential closed session minutes, and release or hold from release the closed session minutes as indicated in the recommendation was **approved**.

c. Recommendation for Authorized Check Signatory.

Board Chair Hile called for a motion to approve Mark Huffman, Marketing Manager, and Jeff Mancil, Service Delivery Manager, to be added as additional authorized signatories for all Connect Transit bank accounts.

Trustee Rao motioned; seconded by Secretary Foster.

Discussion:

Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director, explained Connect Transit must have two (2) signatures on each written check. Currently Connect signatories are Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director; Dave White, Safety and Training Director; and Steve Stockton, IT Manager.

Staff recommends five (5) bank account signatories, Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director; Dave White, Safety and Training Director; Steven Stockton, IT Manager; Mark Huffman, Marketing Manager; and Jeff Mancil, Service Delivery Manager, to cover when staff are out of the office. Having these staff as signatories offers sufficient security through separation of duties to avoid a conflict of having procurement or finance involved in a purchase from beginning to end.

Trustee Cravens asked what the approval process is for electronic payments.

Mr. Kuebrich explained that we still require two signatures for electronic payments but that we don't issue very many because the current software doesn't allow for it very easily.

Board Chair Hile asked if the Trustees had any more questions or comments.

Trustees had no more comments or questions.

Board Chair Hile called for a vote on the motion on the floor since there were no more questions or comments and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster, Board Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

Motion to approve Mark Huffman, Marketing Manager, and Jeff Mancil, Service Delivery Manager, to be added as additional authorized signatories for all Connect Transit bank accounts was **approved**.

d. Recommendation for 2026 Board of Trustees Meeting Schedule.

Board Chair Hile called for a motion to approve the 2026 Board of Trustees meeting schedule as shown below.

Secretary Foster motioned; seconded by Trustee Bianchi.

Discussion:

Mr. Lange stated that the Connect Transit By-laws state the Board of Trustees meetings be held monthly, with the Annual Meeting held immediately prior to the regular March meeting. Connect Transit historically has not held meetings in December by choice of the Trustees.

Connect Transit staff proposes the following meeting schedule for 2026. Please note that we propose to move our November 2026 meeting to early December.

- January 27, 2026: Regular Session
- February 24, 2026: Regular Session
- March 24, 2026: Annual Meeting 4:15
- March 24, 2026: Regular Session
- April 28, 2026: Regular Session
- May 26, 2026: Regular Session
- June 23, 2026: Regular Session
- July 28, 2026: Regular Session
- August 25, 2026: Regular Session
- September 22, 2026: Regular Session
- October 27, 2026: Regular Session
- December 8, 2026: Regular Session

We propose moving the November 2026 meeting to December 2026 to allow for end-of-year procurements to be considered by the Board, instead of waiting two months, which can cause disruptive project delays. In addition, moving the November meeting will remove holiday conflicts for Trustees and staff.

Mr. Lange stated we will be bringing a recommendation to change the March meetings to a different date due to both school districts being on spring break, but for now we are proposing this schedule as it stands.

Board Chair Hile asked if the Trustees had any questions or comments.

Trustees had no comments or questions.

Board Chair Hile called for a vote on the motion on the floor since there were no more questions or comments and asked the Clerk to call the roll.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster, Board Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

Motion to approve the 2026 Board of Trustees meeting schedule as shown was **approved**.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee:

Trustee Rao stated Connect Transit received additional funding for the transit center, which Mr. Lange will discuss more in his report.

Messaging and Marketing Committee:

No report.

Operations and Planning Committee:

No report.

I. BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT:

Board Chair Hile:

- Shared her appreciation for Mr. Lange and the Leadership Team for stepping up in this unusual time, pulling together to provide quality, consistent work.
- Explained that committee meetings will feel a little different with each committee member becoming a subject matter expert on the content in that particular committee's area, and then as a liaison back to the rest of the Board.
- APTA list of 2026 meetings are at each seat, please review and consider attending where you can.
- Wished everyone a warm Thanksgiving.

Vice Chair Buchanan explained that she and Board Chair Hile would be asking more from Trustees in the future so they can become better educated and informed and join with the staff to be good ambassadors while reaching out to the community at events, community organizations, and more. She asked Trustees to let the Board Clerk know if they needed business cards or name tags ordered so they can better represent themselves as the face of the transit operation to our community. Vice Chair Buchanan also encouraged Trustees to attend APTA conferences when they can.

J. DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Lange gave the following updates:

Transit Center:

- Design Progress Report
 - 30% "Pencil's Down" is due Friday, 11/28

- Technical Review Committee meets to review the plans
- 30% design is due to Connect by Friday, 12/19
- Upcoming
 - Awaiting feedback from FTA regarding property agreements
 - Aesthetic Workshop
 - Will reconvene the DT Stakeholder group to share renderings
- Funding
 - \$5 M received from FTA 5339

Trustee Foster shared her pleasure that the transit center is moving forward and that our previous Board Chair would be pleased to hear about the \$5m in funding. She stated she is looking forward to seeing the new renderings.

Trustee Bianchi asked where the \$5m puts us in funding.

Mr. Lange stated total funding available for the project is now \$23m and early estimates look to be approximately \$25m - \$30m.

Vice Chair Buchanan asked if there was a projected date for the stakeholder meeting.

Mr. Lange stated it will likely be after the first of the year.

Other News:

- Labor Negotiations
 - Connect Transit and ATU Local 752 have reached a tentative agreement
 - Next steps:
 - ATU Ratification Vote Sunday, November 30
 - Board of Trustees Approval – Need Special Meeting in December
- Happy Thanksgiving!

Trustees shared their appreciation for staff's work in labor negotiations.

Trustee Bianchi asked if both parties feel good about the agreement.

Mr. Lange stated both bargaining teams are happy, and now the membership will cast their vote. Their bargaining team is confident the agreement will pass.

K. TRUSTEE COMMENTS:

Trustee Foster wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

Trustee Rao stated the Finance Committee meeting was productive and looked forward to the coming meetings and being a conduit to the Board.

L. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

- a. (5 ILCS 120/2) (c) (1) – Personnel Matters

Board Chair Hile called for a motion to adjourn Regular Session and move into an Executive Session.

Vice Chair Buchanan motioned; seconded by Trustee Sanders.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster, Board Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

Motion to adjourn Regular Session and move into Executive Session in the Administrative Conference Room was **approved at 5:15 p.m.**

REGULAR SESSION RE-OPENED:

Board Chair Hile called Regular Session back to order at 5:41 p.m. in the Board Room and Board Clerk, Janice Crago, took attendance via roll call.

Trustees Present:

Trustee Gina Bianchi
Vice Chair Buchanan
Trustee Tyler Cravens
Secretary Linda Foster
Board Chair Julie Hile
Trustee Mandava Rao
Trustee Elicsha Sanders

Trustees Absent:

None

City Managers Present:

City Manager Jeff Jurgens
City Manager Pam Reece

City Managers Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director
Janice Crago, Board Clerk
Charlie Busse, Maintenance Manager
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

Guest(s) Present:

Mark Peterson

L. ADJOURNMENT:

Board Chair Hile called for a Motion to Adjourn.

Trustee Rao; seconded by Trustee Bianchi.

Rollcall Vote:

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster, Board Chair Hile, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

Motion to adjourn was approved at 5:42 p.m.

Linda Foster 1/27/26
Linda Foster, Secretary / Date

Janice Crago 1-27-26
Janice Crago, Board Clerk / Date

[CONNECT TRANSIT SEAL]

