

**Connect Transit Board of Trustees**  
**May 26, 2026, 4:30 p.m.**  
**351 Wylie Drive, Normal, IL 61761**  
**Regular Session Minutes – Approved at 6/23/26 Meeting**

**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

Vice Chair Buchanan 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-Caruth  
Trustee Mandava Rao  
Trustee Elicssha Sanders

**Trustees Absent:**

Board Chair Julie Hile

**City Managers Present:**

Jeff Jurgens, City of Bloomington  
Pam Reece, Town of Normal

**City Managers Absent:**

None

**Staff Present:**

Brady Lange, Deputy Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer  
Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager  
Dave White, Safety and Training Director  
Janice Crago, Board Clerk  
Jared Simons, Interim Transportation Manager  
Jeff Mancil, Service Delivery Manager  
Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director  
Stephanie Butler, Human Resources Manager  
Steve Stockton, IT Manager

**Guest(s) Present:**

Scott Gaddy, ATU Local 752, Connect Transit  
Cal Boddie, ATU Local 752, Connect Transit  
Lauren Bridgewater, Connect Transit  
John Corey, Community Member  
Keith Dobrolinsky, Marsh McClellan and Associates  
Deneen Castellon, March McClellan and Associates

**C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MISSION STATEMENT:**

Trustee Cravens led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Trustee Bianchi read the Connect Transit Mission Statement.

**D. SAFETY MOMENT:**

Dave White, Safety and Training Director, shared tips for preventing electrocution shock and electrical fires.

**E. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None.

**F. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- a. Approval of Regular Session Minutes for April 28, 2026
- b. Approval of Regular and Executive Session Minutes for May 1, 2026
- c. Approval of Regular and Executive Session Minutes for May 8, 2026
- d. Approval of Financial Information for April 2026
- d. Monthly Statistical Report for April 2026

**Vice Chair Buchanan called for a Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda.**

Secretary Foster-Caruth motioned; seconded by Trustee Sanders.

**Discussion:**

Vice Chair Buchanan asked if Trustees had any questions regarding the motion on the floor.

Trustees had no comments or questions.

Vice Chair Buchanan 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-Caruth, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

Consent Agenda was **approved**.

**G. NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. Recommendation for Employment Agreement of Chief Executive Officer – Roll Call Vote**

**Vice Chair Buchanan called for a motion to authorize the Board Chair to execute an employment agreement with the selected candidate for the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO).**

Secretary Foster-Caruth motioned; seconded by Trustee Rao.

**Discussion:**

In February 2026, the Board of Trustees engaged KL2 Connects for the executive search for a new CEO. KL2 Connects is headquartered in North Carolina and has been providing executive search services for approximately 19 years, with a specialized focus in public sector and transit leadership recruitment. The firm has successfully placed more than 260 highly qualified executives across more than 65 public transit agencies nationwide. Their proposal reflected a comprehensive recruitment methodology, a strong understanding of Connect Transit's organizational needs, and a

demonstrated track record of identifying and placing senior transit leadership positions similar in scope and responsibility to the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer role.

Nationwide advertisements and recruiting efforts for the position of CEO began in February 2026. Thirteen candidates were screened by KL2 Connects with a pool of five applicants forwarded to Connect Transit Board Chair for review. On May 1, 2026, Trustees met in an Executive Session to review applicants and determined two applicants to be interviewed. Interviews were conducted during the May 8, 2026, Executive Session.

A conditional offer of employment was made to and accepted by the Board's selected candidate during the last two weeks. The candidate has agreed to accept the position and signed the ensuing employment agreement prepared by Connect Transit's legal counsel, Steve Mahrt of Ancel, Glink.

Vice Chair Buchanan congratulated Brady Lange on his selection for the position of Chief Executive Officer and stated a press release would be issued immediately following the adjournment of the meeting, as well as an announcement to staff.

Secretary Foster-Caruth congratulated Mr. Lange, stating he rose to the top in the interviews and reminded him that the Board is there to support him if he needs it.

Trustee Sanders shared her excitement for Mr. Lange now being in the position and offered her support.

Trustee Rao stated he feels that Mr. Lange is the right fit with no gap during transition, congratulated Mr. Lange.

Trustee Cravens stated that he appreciates Mr. Lange's communication with the Board and progress on the projects and looks forward to that continuation now that he is CEO.

Vice Chair Buchanan 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-Caruth, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

The motion to authorize the Board Chair to execute an employment agreement with the selected candidate for the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) was **approved**.

**b. Recommendation for Awards of Oils and Lubricants Contract – Roll Call Vote**

**Vice Chair Buchanan called for a motion to authorize the Deputy Managing Director to execute a contract with Ken's Oil and Service for the purchase and delivery of oils and lubricants for a term of three years with two one-year options.**

Secretary Foster-Caruth motioned; seconded by Trustee Rao.

**Discussion:**

Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager, explained that since 2021 Connect Transit has been under contract with Ken's Oil Service. That agreement is ending. Historically Connect Transit has contracted for these products and services to lock in preferable pricing without being subjected to market fluctuations.

On March 2, 2026, Connect Transit released an Invitation to Bid (IFB) seeking bids for purchase and delivery of miscellaneous oils and lubricants, not including gasoline and diesel fuel. In response to the IFB, Connect Transit received three bids which are detailed in the table below. Connect Transit staff decided to seek a three-year contract for these goods but allow for price increases or decreases not to exceed the Consumer Price Index for motor oils, coolant, and fluids. The contract is also limited to a total annual increase of 8% or less.

The solicitation allows vendors to request a price change every 180 days due to market changes. Due to the increase in cost of oils and lubricants, the top bidder decided that they could not hold their price for the first 180 days and therefore withdrew their bid. As a result, staff is recommending the second lowest bidder for contract award. Ken's Oil Service has submitted a letter stating they will hold their bid price for the first 180 days.

Ken's Oil Service is located in Forrest, Illinois and has been in business for 30 years. Ken's Oil Service has been a reliable vendor with Connect Transit for over 10 years.

The contract is projected to cost \$56,997.65 each year, according to expected annual usage. All goods and services provided by this contract are accounted for within the FY27 Operating Budget.

Vice Chair Buchanan asked if there were any questions or comments.

Vice Chair Buchanan 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:**

A YE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster-Caruth, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

The motion to authorize the Deputy Managing Director to execute a contract with Ken's Oil and Service for the purchase and delivery of oils and lubricants for a term of three years with two one-year options was **approved**.

**c. Recommendation for Award of Tire Lease Contract – Roll Call Vote.**

**Vice Chair Buchanan called for a motion to authorize the Deputy Managing Director to execute a contract with Bridgestone Americas, Inc., for tire leasing for a term of three years with two periods of two option years.**

Trustee Bianchi motioned; seconded by Secretary Foster-Caruth.

**Discussion:**

Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager, explained that Connect Transit has traditionally leased tires to secure favorable pricing and avoid market volatility. Leasing tires offers greater flexibility compared to buying them, helping lower maintenance expenses, minimize downtime, and lessen environmental risks.

On March 4, 2026, Connect Transit issued an Invitation to Bid (IFB) for tire leasing services. In response, only one bid was received, as outlined in the accompanying table. The Procurement Department contacted other prospective bidders who had not submitted proposals to inquire about their reasons for non-participation. One vendor responded, citing factors such as unfavorable timing, Buy America requirements, a limited pool of tire vendors, and the duration of the contract term.

The total cost of this contract is projected at \$491,676.47 for five years based on estimate annual mileage. Tire lease costs were included in the FY27 approved Operating Budget, and the contract total is within the budgeted amount.

Vice Chair Buchanan asked if there were any questions or comments.

Trustee Bianchi asked for confirmation that this is a three-year contract.

Ms. Strupek confirmed it is a three-year contract with two one-year options.

Trustee Cravens stated that while the tires aren't made local, he does feel good about supporting a local manufacturer.

Vice Chair Buchanan 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-Caruth, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

The motion to authorize the Deputy Managing Director to execute a contract with Bridgestone Americas, Inc., for tire leasing for a term of three years with two periods of two option years was **approved**.

**d. Recommendation for Award of Diesel and Gasoline Fuel Contract – Roll Call Vote**

**Vice Chair Buchanan called for a motion to authorize the Deputy Managing Director to execute a contract with Ken's Oil Service for the purchase and delivery of diesel and gasoline fuels for a term of one year.**

Trustee Rao motioned; seconded by Secretary Foster-Caruth.

**Discussion:**

Ashley Strupek, Procurement Manager, explained that Connect Transit's agreement with its current fuel supplier will end on June 30, 2026. The current contract was issues for an 18-month term,

which helped align fuel purchases with the fiscal year. Moving forward, Connect Transit will issue one-year fuel supply contracts at the start of each fiscal year. Multi-year contracts are currently not used because fuel market conditions are difficult to predict more than a year in advance, which would increase bid prices to mitigate risk.

On March 16, 2026, Connect Transit released an Invitation to Bid (IFB) seeking bids for purchase and delivery of diesel and unleaded gasoline. In response to the IFB, Connect Transit received three bids which are detailed in the table below.

Ken's Oil Service has been Connect Transit's fuel supplier since 2019. Ken's Oil Service is located in Forrest, Illinois and has been in business for 30 years.

The total anticipated fuel cost over the next fiscal year will be \$1,119,452.80, which is within the amount approved in the FY27 Operating Budget.

Vice Chair Buchanan asked if there were any questions or comments.

City Manager Reece asked for clarification on the cost since there was a discrepancy in the recommendation.

Ms. Strupek clarified that the cost is \$1,199,452.80.

Vice Chair Buchanan 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-Caruth, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

The motion to authorize the Deputy Managing Director to execute a contract with Ken's Oil Service for the purchase and delivery of diesel and gasoline fuels for a term of one year was **approved**.

**e. Recommendation for Award of Property and Casualty Insurance Renewal Contract – Roll Call Vote**

**Vice Chair Buchanan called for a motion to renew Connect Transit's property and casualty insurance effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027.**

Trustee Rao motioned; seconded by Trustee Sanders.

**Discussion:**

Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director, explained Connect Transit is renewing the property and casualty insurance for the term of July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. This renewal covers the following insurance coverage: workers' compensation, property and equipment, general liability and employee benefits, automobiles, umbrella, directors' and officers' liability and employment practices, fiduciary liability, crime, cyber liability, and business travel accident.

The premium for the workers' compensation insurance renewal will increase \$69,660 (from \$336,972 for FY26 to \$406,632 for FY27). The increase is due to the proposed increase in payroll in FY27 compared to FY26 - based on projected additional service. Final costs for workers' compensation insurance are audited each year and adjusted based on actual payroll.

The premium for the property and casualty insurance renewal will increase \$70,386 (from \$681,390 for FY26 to \$751,776 for FY27). The majority of this premium increase (\$59,822) is from the automobile liability and comprehensive coverage. This increase is due to an increase in vehicle count, including the 2026 Gilligs, and the expansion of service in McLean County.

Even though this is a significant increase, we feel this is a reasonable renewal. We will be working with Marsh MMA, our insurance broker, to receive assistance and service that will help mitigate our claims in the future.

The total cost for this renewal of all policies shown in the table below is \$1,158,408, a \$140,046 (13.8%) increase over FY26. The increase was anticipated and included in the FY27 Operating Budget.

Keith Dobrolinsky from Marsch McClellan explained that the marketplace is continuing to increase and that our big cost drivers are workers compensation, payroll, and an increase in vehicle count. Our experience mod has gone down from 1.02 to below 1, which has helped reduce the cost a little. He explained that this is a good renewal considering what is happening in the marketplace.

Vice Chair Buchanan asked if there were any questions or comments.

Secretary Foster-Caruth asked if there was anything else we can do to help reduce the cost and experience mod.

Mr. Dobrolinsky stated that we could continue in the direction we have been going, reducing the severity or the workers comp losses, but also decrease the frequency of the losses. He stated that we could also watch our vehicle counts, but that is hard to do with a growing transit system. He summarized that the workers' comp is the main influencer.

Mr. Lange stated that the experience mod going down is a result of Dave White's work in managing the claims. He stated that the vehicle count is a direct correlation to Connect Transit providing additional service to the community, which does increase insurance costs but that it is for the right reasons.

Vice Chair Buchanan 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-Caruth, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

The motion to renew Connect Transit's property and casualty insurance effective July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027 was **approved**.

**f. Recommendation for Award of Health Insurance Renewal Contract – Roll Call Vote**

**Vice Chair Buchanan called for a motion to approve a contract with Connect Transit's current healthcare insurance provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBS), for the term of July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027.**

Trustee Rao motioned; seconded by Trustee Sanders.

**Discussion:**

Stephanie Butler, HR Manager, explained that the current health insurance policy with BCBS is set to renew July 1, 2026.

Deneen Castellon from Marsch McClellan explained that initially the renewal with Blue Cross Blue Shield was approximately 30% and we negotiated it down to 27%. She stated that employees will have the choice of two options to choose from as the base of the plans are the same:

1. **MICO3013:** This plan includes a \$7,750 individual deductible and a \$15,500 family deductible, which are funded through the NonStop Visa Card with a \$2,000 individual backend and a \$4,000 family backend and will be used to pay for eligible medical and prescription expenses.
  - a. **CHANGES:** This plan will now include a \$2,000 backend for individuals and a \$4,000 backend for family, which will be paid by the employee. The updated plan features a higher deductible insurance package through BCBS to help manage rising costs, while continuing to include Nonstop Health for covered in-network care.
  
2. **MPEQ1Z0725:** This plan is structured as a high-deductible Health Savings Account (HSA) plan. This plan includes a \$7,750 individual deductible and a \$15,500 family deductible. To assist with out-of-pocket expenses, the employer will provide HSA seed contributions of \$3,000 towards the individual deductible and \$5,000 toward the family deductible.
  - a. **CHANGES:** This plan will include seed money from the employer towards the cost of the individual deductible of \$3,000 and towards the family deductible of \$5,000.

The ancillary insurance package, including Short-Term and Long-Term Disability, Life/AD&D, and Vision coverage will be provided by Mutual of Omaha for our FY27 renewal.

The dental coverage will be provided by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBS). This change includes a 1% discount from BCBS for our FY27 renewal.

The total increase for health insurance is 17.49% for the FY27 renewal, down from the projected 30% increase. This increase was anticipated in our approved FY27 Operating Budget.

Vice Chair Buchanan asked if there were any questions or comments.

Trustee Cravens asked if the final increase was 27% or 17.49%.

Mr. Lange explained the 27% increase was the expected increase if we had kept the plans exactly the same and before we looked at any other plans. The final increase was the 17.49%.

Secretary Foster-Caruth asked if the plan included eye care.

Ms. Butler stated it does include eye care.

Vice Chair Buchanan 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.

**Rolllcall Vote:**

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster-Caruth, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

The motion to approve a contract with Connect Transit's current healthcare insurance provider, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBS), for the term of July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027 was **approved.**

**H. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Messaging and Marketing Committee:**

Vice Chair Buchanan stated they have notified the City of Bloomington Council there has been a delay in scheduling the meetings with them.

**Finance Committee:**

No report.

**Operations and Planning Committee:**

No report.

**I: BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT:**

Vice Chair Buchanan thanked the Board for giving their time and talents to build what she believes is the best board in years.

**J: DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Mr. Lange shared the following report:

- Design Progress Report
  - 90% Design Package is due June 5, 2026.
  - Still on pace to reach 100% design in July 2026.
  - Beginning to discuss more detailed design elements such as camera layouts, signage, and technology.
  - Upcoming meeting with City of Bloomington Project Review Group.
- Utility Coordination
  - Consultant team is beginning work on coordinating with utility providers for the property.
- IDOT Coordination

- We are beginning coordination with IDOT to ensure bid documents are delivered in a manner that allows for quick approval.
- Service Change Proposal Public Engagement Sessions:

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, June 2, 2026	2:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Western Avenue Community Center
Wednesday, June 3, 2026	4:00 – 7:00 p.m.	ISU Alumni Center
Thursday, June 4, 2026	9:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.	Bloomington Public Library
Friday, June 5, 2026	1:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Connect Transit Board Room

- Fare Collection Rollout
  - Equipment installation is scheduled to begin next week.
  - Once installation and initial validation has begun, a press release will be issued along with targeted and phased roll out.
- IDOT Visit
  - IDOT Transit Capital team visited to review grant closeouts, review upcoming projects, and share updates.
- Federal Updates
  - Surface Transportation Reauthorization: BUILD America 250 Act has bipartisan support and has been passed by the House T & I Committee.
  - The Act includes several legislative priorities we have been supporting
    - NEPA Reforms: Categorical Exclusion (CE) for bus stops & shelters; Minimized documentation for CE's; Streamlining historic preservation review
    - Regulatory Reforms: Capitalization of SaaS; Triennial review streamlining; Five-year availability of bus formula funds
  - Funding included in Act
    - 5307 – Modest increases; Bus Discretionary – Anticipated decrease, STIC allocation increase
  - Next Steps: Must clear additional House committees, a full floor vote in the House, and bicameral negotiations with the Senate.
    - At this point, we don't anticipate this bill moving forward this year.

Mr. Lange thanked the Board for their trust in him as Chief Executive Officer, in leading this organization. He stated he is looking forward to the opportunity to continue leading the great team at Connect Transit, building a strong Union partnership, and continuing the work they have all started.

**K: TRUSTEE COMMENTS:**

The Trustees each shared their congratulations, encouragement, and support of Mr. Lange in his new position.

**L: EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

No Executive Session was held.

**M. ADJOURNMENT:**

**Vice Chair Buchanan called for a motion to adjourn.**

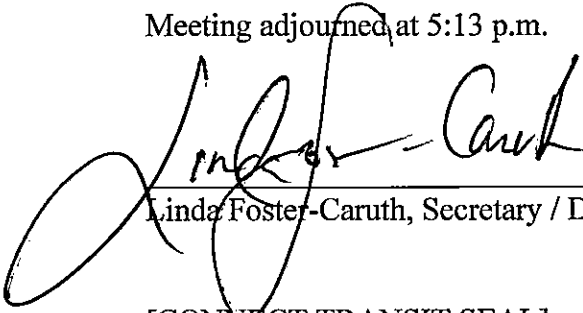
Secretary Foster-Caruth motioned; seconded by Trustee Bianchi.

**Rollcall Vote:**

AYE: Trustee Bianchi, Vice Chair Buchanan, Trustee Cravens, Secretary Foster-Caruth, Trustee Rao, Trustee Sanders

NAY: None

Meeting adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

 6/23/2024  
Linda Foster-Caruth, Secretary / Date

 6/23/2024  
Janice Crago, Board Clerk / Date

[CONNECT TRANSIT SEAL]



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