

**CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PROCEEDINGS OF JULY 26, 2016**

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at the Connect Transit Board Room #135, 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, Illinois 61761 on July 26, 2016 at 4:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Bill Wilson, Chairman
 Mike McCurdy, Vice-Chairman
 Ryan Whitehouse, Secretary
 John Bowman
 Judy Buchanan
 John Thomas

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Jennifer McDade

CITY MANAGERS: Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
 Isaac Thorne, Chief Executive Officer
 Julie Beer, Executive Assistant
 Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 4:29 p.m. Roll call was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting of June 28, 2016
2. Disbursements for Month of June, 2016
3. Financial Report for Month of June, 2016
4. Capital and Self Insurance Reserve Fund Balances for month of June, 2016
5. Monthly Statistical Report for month of June, 2016
6. FY 2016 Fourth Quarter Ridership Data and Trends

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan that the Consent Agenda be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval of the Illinois Farm Bureau Family of Companies Universal Access Agreement

Andrew Johnson, General Manager, introduced this item. This is an extension of a current agreement in place, whereas Connect Transit is reimbursed \$1 per ride. This agreement has continued to be a successful one, and staff recommends approval.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy noted that the Farm Bureau employees would use their valid employer identification cards for access. He questioned the ability to use a swipe card at the fare box. Mr. Johnson affirmed, noting that staff was currently working on a digital solution.

Trustee Judy Buchanan questioned the method of capturing the number of riders. Mr. Johnson replied that the Bus Operators would manually count them using a feature on the new farebox.

Motion by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, seconded by Trustee John Thomas that the Illinois Farm Bureau Family of Companies Universal Access Agreement be approved.

AYE: Chairman Bill Wilson, Vice-Chairman Mike McCurdy, Trustee John Bowman, Trustee Judy Buchanan and Trustee John Thomas

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Secretary Ryan Whitehouse

Motion carried.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS SERVICE AGREEMENT

Whereas, Illinois Farm Bureau family of companies (IFB) at 1701 Towanda Avenue, Bloomington, Illinois and Bloomington- Normal Public Transit System (Connect Transit) at 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, Illinois have agreed that benefits accrue to both parties in providing a means by which IFB may provide for fare prepayment for IFB employees utilizing the fixed route buses of Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System and,

Whereas, IFB and Connect Transit have agreed to terms which will allow IFB employees to use the fixed route services of the Connect Transit without the requirement to pay the posted fare.

Now therefore, the parties make this Universal Access Service Agreement the "Agreement" as follows:

CONTRACTING PARTIES: Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System “Connect Transit”

AND

Illinois Agricultural Association (“IAA”)

UNIVERSAL ACCESS AGREEMENT TERM: July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017 (inclusive)

UNIVERSAL ACCESS SCOPE:

During the period of the Universal Access term, Connect Transit will provide regularly scheduled fixed route services to the general public. Members of the general public are required to pay the posted fare when boarding the bus. Under this Agreement, employees of Illinois Agricultural Association, CC Services, Inc. and GROWMARK, Inc. (collectively, “IFB Family of Companies”, will be allowed to board and ride any and all of the Connect Transit fixed route service offerings with no fare payment after proper display of their valid, current IFB employee identification card. Connect Transit and Illinois Agricultural Association (“IAA”) will mutually determine a method by which the validity of identification cards can be verified.

CHANGES:

Any changes to the Agreement will be enacted upon mutual agreement of the parties, and will be modified by amendment to this Agreement. Such amendment (if any) may be agreed to by the parties without prejudice to any other terms of the Agreement.

OBLIGATIONS OF THE PARTIES

Connect Transit SHALL in its sole discretion and business judgment:

1. Provide buses for the regularly scheduled fixed route bus service offered to the general public on routes and schedules as determined from time to time by Connect Transit and generally announced to the public.
2. Provide vehicle drivers to meet the schedule and service commitment defined above under paragraph 1.
3. Maintain and service all vehicles provided under paragraph 1.
4. Provide, during regular Connect Transit office hours, in-house telephone information services to callers who seek information about Universal Access services.
5. Accept IFB Family of Companies issued employee identification cards, valid during the contract period, as pre-paid fares which entitle the bearer to whom the card was issued to ride Connect Transit fixed route services without fare payment. Persons who do not display a current employee identification card will be charged the general public posted fare.
6. Comply with all applicable laws and policies in the conduct of its business and in the performance of its obligations under this Agreement.

7. Exercise supervisory responsibility over employees of Connect Transit in the performance of its obligations under this Agreement.

UNIVERSAL ACCESS SERVICE AGREEMENT PRICE:

Universal Access charges will be based on actual ridership per month at a cost of \$1.00 per ride.

CONTRACT PAYMENT TERMS

Invoices will be sent monthly at the beginning of each month following universal access by IAA employees. Payment will be due 30 days after the invoice date.

OTHER MATTERS

Assignment: This Agreement shall not be assigned or delegated without the written consent of either party.

Relationship of Parties: Connect Transit is for all purposes an independent contractor and shall not be considered an employee or agent of IAA.

Binding Effect: This Agreement is binding upon the parties hereto and their successors and assigns.

Equal Employment: The parties represent to one another that each is an equal opportunity employer and agrees to abide by any applicable Federal and State rules and regulations concerning the same.

Force Majeure: This Agreement may be suspended or terminated when performance, by either party, becomes impossible or commercially frustrated due to events beyond the control of the party.

Venue: The parties hereby irrevocably and unconditionally submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of any State of Illinois court sitting in Bloomington, Illinois over any suit, action or proceeding at law or in equity arising out of or relating to this Agreement regardless of whether a party is a plaintiff or defendant in such suit, action or proceeding. The parties hereby irrevocably and unconditionally waive (i) any objection to the laying of venue of any such suit, action or proceeding brought in any such court and any claim that any such suit, action or proceeding brought in any such court has been brought in an inconvenient forum and (ii) any right a party has to a trial by jury in any action or proceeding arising out of or relating to this Agreement. Each party agrees that a final judgment in any such suit, action or proceeding brought in any such court shall be conclusive and binding upon it and may be enforced in any other court to whose jurisdiction such party is or may be subject by suit upon such judgment.

Choice of Law: This Agreement shall be governed by, and construed and enforced in accordance with, the laws of the State of Illinois, regardless of and without reference to principles of conflicts of law.

Entire Agreement: This Agreement puts an end to all negotiations between the parties and constitutes the entire agreement between the parties.

SIGNATURE FORM

This Agreement is made and concluded by and between Illinois Agricultural Association and Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System and each party’s successors and assigns.

For and in consideration of the payments and agreements herein provided for to be made and performed the parties agree to furnish all labor, equipment, services, materials, and other means to do all work necessary to perform the duties and responsibilities to one another as set forth and all in accordance with this Agreement.

IAA agrees to pay Connect Transit for services rendered and work performed by Connect Transit in accordance with this Agreement subject to any additions or deductions as provided in said Agreement and to make payments on account thereof as provided in said Agreement.

This Agreement and all the covenants shall inure to the benefit and be binding upon the parties and their successors and assigns. Neither party shall have the right to assign, transfer, or sublet its interest or obligations hereunder without the written consent of the other party.

FOR: Bloomington-Normal Public Transit System

BY: _____

Attest: _____

Bill Wilson, Chairman, Board of Trustees
Trustees

Ryan Whitehouse, Secretary, Board of

FOR: Illinois Agricultural Association

BY: _____

Authorized Signatory

Typed or Printed Name of Authorized Signatory

Appointment to Community Transportation Advisory Committee

Andrew Johnson, General Manager introduced this item. He noted that the Community Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC) was created in 2014. One member had resigned, which created an opening for a new member. An application from Mr. John Corey had been received. Mr. Corey is a transit enthusiast and at times uses the Connect Transit system. Staff reviewed Mr. Corey’s application, and recommends that he be appointed to the CTAC.

Isaac Thorne, Chief Executive Officer, (COO) stated that CTAC was currently working on a sidewalk/bus shelter review project.

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Trustee John Bowman that the appointment of John Corey to the Community Transportation Advisory Committee be approved.

AYE: All.

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Approval of Proposed Fare Structure

Andrew Johnson, General Manager introduced this item. He provided the Board an overview of the proposal. The base fare would not increase, but the fare structure would be expanded to include 1 day and 7 day unlimited ride passes, and a 30 day, unlimited ride pass. The 30 day, unlimited ride pass would be a true 30 day pass; it would expire 30 days from the first use.

The Connect Mobility monthly unlimited ride pass would be eliminated and a 10 ride and 20 rides pass introduced. The 10 ride pass would be \$20 and the 20 ride pass would be \$40. The fare of \$2 per trip would not increase.

Mr. Johnson noted overall, it was not certain what the financial impact the expanded fare structure would have to the fixed route service, however, it was expected that financial impact for the Connect Mobility service would be minimal.

Mr. Johnson reminded the Board that public hearings were held prior to the proposal as required by law. All public comments received were taken into consideration for the proposal and were provided to the Board prior to the meeting.

He noted fares have not been changed in nine (9) years. It was not necessary to wait that long for future changes.

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse questioned the number of rides taken on the current \$51 unlimited ride Connect Mobility pass. Isaac Thorne, COO responded 31 ½ rides per month.

Mr. Johnson added that approximately 100 unlimited ride mobility passes were sold per month.

Trustee John Bowman noted the market rate for the unlimited ride Connect Mobility pass would be \$63.

Trustee Bowman questioned Illinois escheatment regulation as it pertains to any unused fare cards. Andrew Johnson, General Manager responded that he would research and advise the Board regarding same.

Trustee John Bowman stated he had attended the public hearings for the proposed fee structure. There were some in the disabled community that were concerned about the elimination of the unlimited ride Connect Mobility pass.

Trustee John Thomas responded the new fare structure provides greater flexibility and the new route structure provides increased service.

Trustee Judy Buchanan questioned the timing for a potential general fare increase. Andrew Johnson, General Manager replied the appropriate time would be during the budget planning process. The next one would be in the spring of 2017.

Chairman Bill Wilson stated the proposed fare structure lends itself appropriately as presented. The Board could consider a general fare increase in the future.

Mr. Johnson stated if the Board wished to keep the 30 day unlimited Connect Mobility pass, that increased service and frequency should be considered. He requested the Board also approve the 10 and 20 ride pass options. This provided even more flexibility.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated the value of the service was increased with improved frequency and the addition of Sunday service.

Trustee John Bowman noted the need to educate the public about the cost for running the system, particularly as it relates to the actual per passenger cost for providing both fixed route and Connect Mobility service.

Trustee Judy Buchanan agreed, stating increasing the general fare would never be an easy discussion. She believed the proposal as presented should be approved. The Board could revisit a fare increase if necessary. The timing would never be easy.

Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager, cautioned against invoking a correlation between a fare increase and added service, in light of the municipalities' contribution of a portion of the increased sales tax revenues as operational funding, which largely covers any increased cost for the added service.

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse noted the system has experienced a lot of change all at once.

Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager reminded the Board that fares have not been increased in 9 years. It was a good time to have this conversation. The proposed fare structure is modest, but the Board should not wait another 9 years to review. The Board should periodically review the service and fare structure while balancing the fact that the system is a public service that is funded by tax dollars. The Board should keep fares as low as possible.

Isaac Thorne, COO noted it was typical for a transit agency to adjust fares in conjunction with service and/or frequency changes.

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy that the following Fixed Route Passes be approved: 1 Day Pass - \$3.00 Unlimited Rides, 7 Day Pass - \$10.00 Unlimited Rides, 30 Day Pass - \$32.00 Unlimited Rides and the Monthly Fast Pass be eliminated; the following Connect Mobility Passes be approved: 10 Ride Pass - \$20.00, 20 Ride Pass - \$40.00 and Paratransit Mobility Access (PMA) Monthly Pass - \$65.00 Unlimited Rides.

AYE: Chairman Bill Wilson, Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy, and Trustee Judy Buchanan and Trustee John Thomas

NAY: Secretary Ryan Whitehouse and Trustee John Bowman

Motion carried.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Andrew Johnson, General Manager provided the Board an overview of the Strategic Plan Update.

Strategic Plan Update – July 2016

Following the adoption of the Connect Transit Strategic Plan, staff has been directed to provide quarterly updates on progress toward the goals set in the plan. Those goals and progress to date is listed below:

Funding

- General Manager and Finance Director met with Congressional delegation to discuss federal transit funding in Bloomington-Normal.
- Implemented new electronic fare collection system that has smart card and mobile ticketing capabilities.
- Partnered with the ATU on a new health insurance plan that provides similar coverage while limiting the premium increase due to several catastrophic claims.

Expanded Services

- Connect Transit hosted community listening sessions and held numerous one-on-one meetings with community groups to receive input on the Comprehensive Operational Analysis recommendations.
- Connect Transit made presentations to both councils to detail final plans for route restructuring.
- Board of Trustees approved the Connect Transit route restructuring and first mile/last mile solutions, bringing Sunday service and increased bus frequency to the community.
- Staff engaged in discussions and planning with the Town of Normal for creation of a bike share program.

Awareness and Education

- Connect Transit staff gave numerous media interviews to discuss the COA and route restructuring.
- Held media training for staff and Board Chair and Vice Chair.

Key Relationships/Partnerships

- Connect Transit staff participated in the EDC One Voice trip to help gain federal support and funding for projects in the community.
- Continued participation in furthering regional economic development by serving on the BN Advantage Steering Committee.
- Continued to meet with Unit 5 to pursue partnership opportunities.

In relation to the EDC One Voice trip, Mr. Johnson stated he had been paying attention to the National Conventions. He noted the Republican Platform had recently stated that public transportation should be removed from public funding, that the Federal Government should not be in the business of funding public transportation, and should be a local level responsibility. If passed, this legislation could be catastrophic to public transportation agencies nationwide.

Mr. Johnson requested that Isaac Thorne, COO and Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager provide the Board with an overview of the most recent operations, public outreach and education initiatives in conjunction with the recently approved route restructure.

Isaac Thorne, COO, addressed the Board. He stated the new bus stop signs for new stops are currently being installed and temporary signs are replacing old stops. The new stops become active on August 15th. Staff is also currently conducting route reviews.

The most recent class of new Bus Operators will be ready prior to August 15th and five (5) new buses have been received.

Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager addressed the Board. She stated three (3) private public education sessions have been conducted, with more upcoming. Additionally, public education sessions are planned for August 2, 3, 8 and 10, 2016. An instructional video is underway which will provide new route virtual tours.

There will be two (2) Sunday Service free preview days on August 7th and August 14th, and all rides will be free for the first two (2) weeks of the new routes from August 15th through August 28th, 2016.

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse questioned Connect Transit's involvement in the B/N Advantage initiative. Andrew Johnson, General Manager responded that a few staff that have volunteered for the initiative: he was on the Steering Committee, Julie Beer, Executive Assistant is providing Administrative Support, and Isaac Thorne is on the Transportation Committee. The committees meet periodically.

Trustee John Thomas questioned the public's perception of the new fareboxes. Mr. Johnson responded that the feedback has been good and Connect Transit's customers are responding positively.

Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager questioned when the new mobile application would replace the current DoubleMap application. Isaac Thorne, COO responded August 15, 2016. Mr. Peterson questioned if the application would be downloadable prior to the launch date. Mr. Johnson stated he would verify when it would be available to download and would follow up with the Board.

Mr. Peterson stated that all of the changes have been exciting and impressive. He applauded all of Connect Transit's staff, including those that were not in attendance, for all of their hard work, impressive planning, educating and launching all of these new improvements. They all have done great work.

Trustee Judy Buchanan questioned the status of the consulting agreement with LifeCil. Mr. Johnson responded that it has been going very well. Very few have been deemed ineligible. In most cases, those that have been deemed ineligible simply did not respond to LifeCil's request for recertification.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated he had attended the Chamber of Commerce Business after Hours event hosted by Connect Transit. The food was very good and the event was a success.

He had been discussing the General Manager's evaluation tool with Chairman Bill Wilson. He hoped for a more robust evaluation. The tool would be forwarded on to the Board members in the next month.

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse also attended the Chamber of Commerce Business after Hours event hosted by Connect Transit. He commended Connect Transit staff for their hard work. Staff did a great job and everything looked very nice. A lot of people complimented the Connect Transit facility and organization.

Chairman Bill Wilson stated that it has been an exciting year. The Comprehensive Operational Analysis has had a remarkable impact. Connect Transit's opportunity to be a recipient of the sales tax endeavor has been thrilling for several reasons, it speaks well of the community and Connect Transit's opportunity to build upon it. The value of public transportation in the community has continued to make gains. He appreciates the Board and Connect Transit staff for all of their hard work.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee John Thomas, seconded by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy to adjourn.

Time: 5:48 p.m.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Julie Beer, Executive Assistant