

**CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
WORK SESSION PROCEEDINGS OF NOVEMBER 15, 2016**

The Work Session 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 November 15, 2016 at 4:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Mike McCurdy, Vice-Chairman
 Lauren Lacy
 Jennifer McDade
 John Bowman
 Judy Buchanan
 John Thomas

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Ryan Whitehouse, Secretary

CITY MANAGERS:

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
 Julie Beer, Executive Assistant

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 4:37 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy opened the meeting. He stated there were a few items for discussion. First was to discuss the General Manager's goals for the upcoming year.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned if Andrew Johnson, General Manager wished to make any statements prior to beginning discussion. Mr. Johnson stated he welcomed Board direction for the upcoming year. He hoped customer focus and service delivery would be part of the goals for the upcoming year.

Ryan Whitehouse, Secretary arrived at 4:39 p.m.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated the new route structure would continue to be measured.

Trustee Judy Buchanan questioned community outreach. Mr. Johnson stated there is always room for improvement. Staff was constantly refining its approach.

Trustee John Thomas noted the importance of outreach and partnerships with area businesses and retailers. Historically, public transit has not been a part of the design process of new developments. He reminded the Board of two (2) major retail projects currently being built. The design of these projects should include public transit.

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse stated Connect Transit staff should work with the municipalities to ensure that public transit is considered when projects are being developed and built within the community.

Trustee John Thomas agreed. He stated he had received a letter from a rider expressing concerns about walking in snow and ice to get to businesses front doors. There are plenty of do's and don'ts examples around the community that show what happens when public transit is not part of the design process.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy summarized that the first goal for the General Manager was to increase outreach on three (3) levels, customer, business and municipal.

Trustee Jennifer McDade questioned if the Board would be finalizing the General Manager's goals or if the Board would be setting its expectations and review as needed.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated 2017 would be a year of measurement and metrics.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy noted the 2016 goal for determining the best transfer point for Downtown Bloomington and the shopping malls were ongoing. He questioned a realistic form for this goal in 2017.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager responded that it would be possible to identify locations and create a wish list of properties. There was a small chance of securing a location, but zero (0) chance of securing funding to build any transfer facilities in the next year. Connect Transit staff would work toward making any potential projects as "shovel ready" as possible.

Trustee Lauren Lacy questioned concerns regarding the Downtown Bloomington transfer station. Mr. Johnson responded that it is not ideal. It is dirty, poorly lit and promoted loitering. There is not enough space on street to stage all the buses at one time. Vice Chairman McCurdy stated Connect Transit staff and Trustees have been working with the City of Bloomington and McLean County to improve landscaping and cleanliness.

Trustee Judy Buchanan reminded the Board that the Councils enjoy receiving periodic updates from Connect Transit. She believed it would be helpful to plan ride-alongs with City and Town officials.

Trustee John Thomas suggested conducting anonymous, random surveys of riders to obtain a better sense of rider satisfaction. Trustee Judy Buchanan agreed, it was important to continue improving the rider experience.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned the need for a fare study. Not to increase fares, but to examine if there was capacity in the system to increase fare. Trustee John Bowman stated he believed increased fare revenue should be a goal.

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse stated that a fare study provides the assumption that a fare increase will follow. He suggested service be studied to determine if the service provided warranted a fare increase.

Trustee Judy Buchanan stated determining the reasons for declining ridership should be a goal.

Trustee Jennifer McDade stated it is not bad to look at the Connect Transit funding mix. Connect Transit should look at the diversity of its funding. Trustee John Thomas agreed, noting it would be beneficial to also examine alternative fuels.

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse stated the system should analyze the value of the service that it is providing; if the system meeting the needs of the ridership.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated it would be best to wait until January of 2018 to conduct any fare or revenue study. Trustee John Thomas stated such study should include Unit Five School District.

Trustee John Bowman questioned outreach to the non-riding community. Trustee John Thomas stated a goal could include marketing to the business community and elderly community.

Trustee John Bowman noted that 2017 would be the 150th anniversary of the public transit system in the community.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated Work Sessions to discuss strategic planning would be scheduled. In addition to strategic planning discussion, the Board would discuss the roles of trustees, staff members, etc. Trustee Jennifer McDade had suggested a facilitator to conduct this discussion. The dates for the work sessions would be January 21, 2017 and February 4, 2017. He would arrange with the facilitator to attend these meetings.

Julie Beer, Executive Assistant stated she would notify the Ex-Officio Trustees of the Board of the date selected.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated the final item for discussion was reporting metrics.

Mr. Johnson stated per Trustee McDade's suggestion, staff had begun tracking new route issues, processing complaints and concerns. A first draft had been provided to the Board. He sought their feedback regarding same.

Trustee Jennifer McDade suggested a legend be included that would serve as a key to deciphering the reports. She encouraged incorporating numbers where ever helpful, such as the highest traveled routes, etc. Secretary Ryan Whitehouse stated specifics were needed to determine if problems and/or complaints are service related or policy related.

Mr. Johnson stated it would take time to become comfortable with all the information provided in the reports. Vice Chairman McCurdy suggested the reports include numbers with interpretations. Mr. Johnson agreed, noting that with the Board's input, the reports would be tweaked in order to provide them with the most relevant information.

Vice Chairman McCurdy stated the report provided to the Board was a good start.

Trustee John Bowman stated his preference that the report includes tracking capacity and separate reporting numbers for Sunday ridership.

Mr. Johnson responded the Board would determine what metrics are reported. He questioned additional information the Board wanted to review. Secretary Ryan Whitehouse stated monthly comparisons would be helpful. Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy suggested ridership numbers by individual routes, reported Monday through Saturday, and reported separately for Sunday.

Trustee Jennifer McDade agreed. She stated the Board could review and tweak the reports as they are presented to narrow down the information that is most relevant. Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy agreed, noting that ridership was the top priority.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Jennifer McDade, Seconded by Trustee John Thomas to adjourn.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Time: 6:08 p.m.

Julie Beer, Executive Assistant