

CONNECT TRANSIT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
February 26, 2013

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 on February 26, 2013 at 4:30 p.m.

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

TRUSTEES ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager  
Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: Mick Ferrell, ATU Local 752  
Brian Enata, ATU Local 752  
Sylvia Ventura, ATU Local 752  
Joyce Boyd, Rider

CITY MANAGERS: David Hales, City of Bloomington  
Mark Peterson, Town of Normal

**Call to Order**

Chairman Judy Buchanan called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. and roll call was taken. Chairman Buchanan welcomed everyone and commented that no one was wishing to make public comment today.

**Public Comments**

Chairman Buchanan announced Mr. Brian Enata, ATU Local 752, passed out a paper regarding the route restructuring and that he will email it out to everyone to be sure everyone receives a copy.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Buchanan stated there are two sets of minutes in the packet to be approved. The first is for the Special Meeting of January 12, 2013. Ms. Mary Caisley made a motion to table those minutes for a future meeting due to some errors. Mr. John Thomas seconded the motion. The Trustees voted to table the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 12, 2013.

Chairman Buchanan continued with the January 22, 2013 Board Meeting minutes. On a motion by Ms. Caisley, and a second by Mr. Bill Wilson, the Board voted to approve the Minutes for January 22, 2013 as presented.

### **Items Removed From Consent Agenda**

#### **Consent Agenda**

On a motion by Mr. Thomas, and a second by Mr. Wilson, the Trustees voted to approve the consent agenda as presented including the following items:

- 1. Review and Approve February Disbursements**
- 2. Review and Receive January Monthly Ridership Report**

#### **Consent Agenda Discussion**

Mr. Andrew Johnson, General Manager, stated normally the Trustees would have the January Monthly and Year-To-Date Financial Statements and the January Capital and Self-Insurance Reserve Fund Balances to review and approve, however, our Treasurer has taken an unexpected leave of absence and we intend to have the financial statements all caught up in time for the meeting next month.

Mr. Thomas asked about the large payment to Midwest Transit Equipment. Mr. Johnson responded that was for the eight new Special Service buses. Mr. Thomas also asked about the payment to Commerce Bank. Mr. Johnson explained that was a check that was written to transfer money from the old bank account with Illinois Funds to the new account at Commerce Bank. We are now writing checks through Commerce Bank. It is not an expense, however, it was a check that was written and cashed to transfer money from one bank to another.

#### **Old Business**

#### **New Business**

- 1. Review and Approve Federal Transit Administration ECHO System Access Authorizations**

Mr. Johnson reported with the absence of our Treasurer we have found there are some gaps in our authorization and access to the ECHO System, which is the automated clearing house for the distribution of federal funds. We are close to the time when the federal government will be releasing some of our grants due to some of the tie ups that were involved with the MAP 21 and we need to make some adjustments to our ECHO System access authorizations. Mr. Johnson recommends removing Ms. Angie Ballantini, Treasurer, temporally as someone who has authorization to do the draw down. Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director and Mr. Jim Cochran, Accountant, will be authorized to initiate fund draw downs. The General Manager will be the third user, with inquiry access only. The Safety and Training Director has no procurement or accounting duties. There is a complete process used to make a draw down including a great deal of documentation and sign-offs. All the protections are in place. These changes will allow Connect Transit to have a proper backup in place to make federal fund draw downs on a timely basis.

On a motion by Mr. Wilson, and a second by Mr. Thomas, the Trustees voted to approve the changes in the Federal Transit Administration ECHO System Access Authorizations.

## **2. Review and Approve Joining the “Getting America to Work” Transit Coalition**

Mr. Johnson stated this coalition originated with the RTA in Chicago. When we were first approached about joining it was Chicago focused. We want to be sure they are looking out for the interests of all Transit properties. Mr. Johnson has worked with Mr. Jeff Nelson, General Manager of the Rock Island Transit System and also legislative Chair for the American Public Transportation Association. Mr. Nelson has investigated and is able to define what the longer term focus is for the coalition. The coalition has broadened and now counts members from across the country, as well as almost all of the major transit systems in Illinois. There is no expense involved and Mr. Johnson recommends that Connect Transit join the coalition. We are adding support to another voice at the national and local level. At this point there are no obligations involved and no meetings to attend. Connect Transit would be added to the membership list and our name and logo would be included on the website. There is strength in numbers and a benefit having another voice at the State and National levels fighting for our interests.

On a motion by Mr. Ryan Whitehouse, and a second by Mr. Wilson, the Board voted to approve joining the “Getting America to Work Transit Coalition”.

## **General Manager’s Report**

### **1. Listening Session Update**

Mr. Johnson commented the Listening Sessions were not as well attended as they had hoped. Those attending are individual who had issues with the initial route

restructuring proposal and they have presented a variety of issues. The sessions were advertised but we did not get a good turn out from other demographics of our ridership and community stakeholders. Mr. Johnson continued the inference one can take away is that the route restructuring impact is not registering with the public or the public for the most part is ok with what we are trying to do, which is to make the system more effective and efficient. We will follow up on the issues brought up at the sessions and they will be transcribed for you to read all the comments. It was a worthwhile experience. If we decide to do this again we probably will not have as many scheduled as we did this time.

Mr. Johnson stated the next step is to contact the local businesses, especially those impacted with the parking lot areas we have been discussing, to get their views. We are also working with our drivers on a Task Force. We have met once and we will meet again to continue discussing ideas on routing. We expect to have a proposal for the Board to review in April.

Mr. Whitehouse suggested letting the McLean County Chamber of Commerce help advocate and partner when approaching and contacting the local businesses.

Mr. McCurdy suggested that perhaps the attendance is low because there is no proposal on the table currently. The route restructure is not real to the riders because they are not able to see the changes that are being proposed. Mr. McCurdy believes we will see attendance ramp back up when the next proposal comes out and we have the open houses and public hearings.

Mr. Johnson added his goal is to get the community coming out to give us a pulse and their views on the Transit System. That will take time for people to adjust to this approach. It is a process which takes time to get accustomed to. The Transit is listening, but the question is what will the Transit do with what the public has said? The proof will be in our actions.

Mr. McCurdy stated the Listening Sessions serve a great purpose even though the attendance was low. It is important to make the Transit Management available to the public.

Mr. Thomas asked if we could do an electronic survey, similar to Survey Monkey, to get feedback on some of the major concerns, to even just determine what the major concerns are for our customers.

Mr. Johnson replied that is being considered, because not everyone is going to come out and stand up in front of a group of people and talk. We are trying to determine the best approach so the information gathered is useful. Mr. Johnson feels a survey needs to be part of this process.

Mr. Whitehouse suggested asking Mr. David Hales, Bloomington City Manager, or Mr. Mark Peterson, Normal Town Manager, how effective a survey is because the demographic we serve may not have many customers with internet access or computers. Mr. McCurdy added a survey would not replace anything, but would be an additional tool to add to the input already given. At the same time the taxpayers could add their opinions. They are paying for the Transit. How does the community perceive the Transit and its contribution to the citizens?

Ms. Caisley asked if the McLean County Chamber of Commerce would be able to help advertise the survey or spread the word to a different portion of the community. Mr. Whitehouse stated the Chamber does have policies about surveys for any community group, but he will investigate if there is another way to promote the survey or get the word out. Ms. Caisley added when we were working on the Teal J route, McDonald's did help to get the survey out to their employees. Mr. Whitehouse said this may be an exception and he will talk with his CEO about it.

Ms. Caisley wanted to commend Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director, and Mr. Roy Rickert, Operations Director, for the professionalism and the calm way they have responded to the questions posed at the Listening Sessions. They remained cool and professional when they could have gotten very defensive at times.

## **2. IDOT Capital Grant Status**

Mr. Johnson reported the Illinois Department of Transportation has reviewed the projects and have submitted our grant application to a committee made up of IDOT staff and they will meet in March and select projects to receive Capital Grant funds. The process is moving along and we hope to hear by mid March if we will be receiving any capital grant funds for new buses. Mr. Johnson feels we have a strong application and hopes we will receive the funding we are looking for.

## **3. Labor Contract Status**

Mr. Johnson stated we are still in discussions with the ATU about the existing labor contract. Regarding the organizing effort for the dispatchers and a couple of administrative employees, our attorneys have reached a tentative agreement between the ATU and management. It is now in the hands of the Illinois Labor Relations Board to be certified. When the certification occurs we will sit down with the ATU and determine how we will approach that negotiation. Mr. Johnson stated we should have something for the Board soon on the changes to that contract and may even have a contract for Board approval next month or April.

Mr. Johnson added we now have leased an EV Car and granted Mr. McCurdy's request to get with the "electric vehicle" movement in Normal. We still need to put license plates on it. We don't have a charger here, but we can charge it at Uptown

Station or plug it into the wall in the garage overnight. The lease runs around \$85.00 a month for two years. So it will cost roughly \$2,100.00 for the two year commitment.

### **Public Comment**

Chairman Buchanan requested the Board's indulgence to allow a patron to make public comment at this time. The patron was delayed in getting to the meeting on time due to the weather conditions.

On a motion by Mr. Whitehouse, and a second by Mr. McCurdy, the Trustees voted to suspend the Public Comment Policy to allow the customer to make comment at this time during the meeting.

Ms. Joyce Boyd introduced herself and stated she wanted to report an incident that occurred on February 7, 2013 at Eastland Mall. Ms. Boyd reported one of the drivers humiliated her, cursed her out, and body bumped her. Ms. Boyd stated she filed a complaint with the police department and it has now been turned over to the State's Attorney's office. Ms. Boyd stated she called Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director, and left a message for him, but never received a call back or was ever told what actions were taken. Ms. Boyd repeated that a police report has been made.

Chairman Buchanan thanked Ms. Boyd for her comment and stated, as per policy, after the speaker has made a statement, no further debate, dialogue, or comment will occur.

### **Correspondence and Media**

Mr. Thomas inquired if the minutes for the Study Group needed to be approved. Mr. Johnson responded the minutes were put in the Board Packet solely to keep the Trustees informed of the progress of the Study Group.

### **Trustee Comments**

Chairman Buchanan stated she was planning to review and update the very out dated Trustee By-Laws, however, she is going to hold that off until next month.

Chairman Buchanan informed the Trustees they would be receiving an email regarding the APTA meeting which is going to be held in Indianapolis in May. It is a good opportunity since it is relatively close. Hopefully, a car load of Trustees can arrange to go. There is an allowance in the budget for Trustees to attend meetings such as this.

Chairman Buchanan commented all the Trustees should have received an invitation from the Regional Planning Commission for their meeting "Expanding Transit to Meet Future Travel Demands". This is a breakfast meeting in mid-April at 7:30 a.m. Please let Mr. Johnson know if you wish to attend and reservations can be made for you. Ms. Caisley stated she will be sure to inform her replacement of the meeting. Mr. Whitehouse added the Chamber

partnered with MCRPC to get the speaker Janet Kazinoky, who is very engaging, a good speaker, and well versed and knowledgeable about transportation. Mr. Whitehouse suggested if the Trustees have the time this would be a very rewarding meeting to attend. Breakfast is at 7:00 a.m. with the presentation beginning at 7:30 a.m. Mr. Johnson added he heard Ms. Kazinoky speak in 2007 and stated she really knows transportation.

Chairman Buchanan continued we did have some activity in several of the Ad Hoc subcommittees.

Mr. Whitehouse reported on the Advocacy Committee stating that Mr. Randy Pollard from Senator Kirk's office came to meet with Mr. Johnson and Mr. Whitehouse and toured the Transit Facility since the last Board meeting. Both Senator Durbin's office and Senator Kirk's office seem to be most impressed with the DoubleMap software that tracks our buses in real time on line and on smart phones. We have also reached out to Congressmen Schock, Davis, and Kinzinger and we are hopeful to get them to visit us, tour the facility, and take a ride on the bus this summer. We were surprised to get such a quick response and visit from both Senators Durbin and Kirk's offices. Senator Durbin is interested in coming back and hopefully we will get him to return. It is doubtful that Senator Kirk will visit, but possibly his Deputy Chief, Andrea, who travels to Pontiac often will stop in sometime when she is in the area.

Chairman Buchanan thanked Mr. Whitehouse and Mr. McCurdy for their efforts on advocacy.

Mr. Thomas and Mr. John Bowman met as the subcommittee to review the Strategic Plan. Mr. Thomas reported they met on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and February 16<sup>th</sup> and reviewed the 2010 – 2013 Strategic Plan making notes on what has been achieved, what has been started, what progress has been made, as well as what has not been accomplished. There were a total of 43 goals listed under the categories of Employees, Operational Procedures, Community, Funding, Services, Marketing, and Technology. By the subcommittee's evaluation, 10 goals were rated as being completed, two as having been substantially completed, fourteen as having made substantial progress, three as having made adequate progress, nine as having made unknown progress, one as having made insignificant progress, and four as having made no progress toward completion. The most significant progress was in the area of technology, with all but one goal being entirely met. The most unsatisfactory area of completion was in the area of Services, where none of the goals were entirely completed. Operational Procedures strategy goals were also almost entirely unmet, although most had seen some progress. There were also two important current goals that were largely missing from the plan: the work of the Sustainable Funding Study Group, and implementation of fare box collection systems and technology. The major concerns that developed in the subcommittee's discussions were: the need for a revision of the Mission and Vision Statements to better reflect achievable and actionable aspirations and the need for a new strategic plan exercise. Involving the new General Manager in that process and using the results from the Study Group report will be key in that process.

Mr. Peterson commented the good news is the technology goals were largely met as that was a primary concern of the strategic planning group.

Chairman Buchanan thanked Mr. Bowman and Mr. Thomas for their report.

Ms. Caisley stated her group will have a report ready for the March meeting.

Chairman Buchanan announced the Normal Town Council has approved an appointment to replace Ms. Caisley. Ms. Felicia Shaw has been appointed to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Ms. Caisley. Ms. Shaw's appointment will begin April 1, 2013. The term expires June 30, 2014. Ms. Shaw has been with State Farm for over twenty years and the breadth of her experience will contribute to the Board.

#### **Request for Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters**

On a motion by Mr. Wilson, and a second by Ms. Caisley, the Trustees voted to adjourn the public meeting and begin an executive session to discuss personnel matters at 5:15 pm.

#### **Reconvene**

Subsequently, on a motion by Mr. McCurdy, and a second by Mr. Thomas the Board voted to adjourn the executive session and reconvene the public meeting.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further public business, on a motion by Mr. Whitehouse, and a second by Mr. Wilson, the Trustees voted to adjourn the public meeting.

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John M. Bowman, Secretary