

CONNECT TRANSIT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING  
April 23, 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 April 23, 2013 at 4:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Judy Buchanan, Chairman  
John Thomas, Vice Chairman  
Mike McCurdy  
Felicia Shaw  
Ryan Whitehouse  
Bill Wilson

TRUSTEES ABSENT: John Bowman, Secretary

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager  
Michelle Ferguson, Human Resources Director  
Roy Rickert, Operations Director  
Carl Rokos, Maintenance Director  
Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director  
Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: Jennifer Sicks, McLean County Regional Planning  
Rachel Wells, Pantagraph  
Mick Ferrell, President, ATU Local 752  
Brian Enata, Financial Secretary, ATU Local 752  
Jim Riordan, ATU Local 752 Member  
Marilyn Evans, Rider & CEFT Member  
Hope Darby, Rider & CEFT Member  
Vincent Radcliff, Rider & CEFT Member  
Tracie Holt, Rider  
Larry Dawson, Rider

CITY MANAGERS:

**Call to Order**

Ms. Judy Buchanan, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 4:35 p.m. and roll call was taken. Chairman Buchanan welcomed everyone.

## **Public Comments**

Chairman Buchanan announced three visitors would like to make public comments tonight and she asked Ms. Marilyn Evans to come forward.

Ms. Evans introduced herself and stated she was here as a representative for Mr. Charles Smith, Chairman of the Committee to Ensure Fair Transit (CEFT), who could not attend the meeting due to a conflicting medical appointment. Ms. Evans announced CEFT would like to dispel any rumors people may have heard that CEFT is trying to shut down the bus system. That is not the intention of CEFT. CEFT is concerned about all the Transit riders. It is true that many of the CEFT members are handicapped or disabled and we are not just concerned about the disabled, but we are concerned about anyone and everyone who rides the Transit System. We have conducted a survey and the comment listed the most was to leave the routes as they are with some changes, not all changes. The survey showed most riders were satisfied with the routes as they are currently. Ms. Evans continued requesting advance notification of the schedule for the open houses. CEFT would like to make fliers to pass out to the people riding the buses, to our neighborhoods, and co-workers. The fliers would notify the public of the time, location, and purpose of the open houses and would just assist in getting the word out about the event. CEFT has found that getting information about such events to the riders has been a problem in the past. Ms. Evans suggested getting an announcement on the local television news so more people would be aware of the open houses. In any case, CEFT is planning on making fliers for the open houses.

On a personal note, Ms. Evans stated that she knew of two Trustees who ride the bus and expressed her wish that all the Trustees would use the Transit, or at least try the bus to see what they are managing and checking on. Ms. Evans suggested taking two or three days and just use nothing but the Transit and experience what riders are talking about and observe for yourselves who the riders are, where they are going, what they are dealing with in riding the bus. The riders have lots of positive praises and things to say about the bus. There are some negative issues, but many more positive ones. Ms. Evans continued stating Mr. Johnson has helped resolve several special service issues riders were having by including dispatch in the meeting. Ms. Evans understands the negative issues receive more attention, but she wants to convey there are many positive issues that never get any attention. CEFT is not out to "get" the Transit. We need it very badly. Without the bus Ms. Evans states she would be sitting in her apartment right now. She would not be able to get her own groceries without the bus. The Transit is a very important part of her life and many other people's lives. Ms. Evans reported she counted ten people standing waiting for the Green A this morning and that happens quite often. Ms. Evans thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Chairman Buchanan thanked Ms. Evans and asked Ms. Tracie Holt to speak.

Ms. Holt stated she passed out three different handouts to everyone. One is a twenty-five page paper, which she personally wrote. The second is a nine page packet of charts and statistical route and demographic data. Ms. Holt commented in her paper she refers to the West Bloomington Neighborhood Plan Quality of Life Study. The final hand out has copies of pages from that study which show those references made in Ms. Holt's paper. Ms. Holt continued she

would like to echo Ms. Evans comments that the Transit System is vital to so many people and it seems to Ms. Holt the people in the room don't really know what they are managing. They don't know what is like out there on the buses. The people in the room are looking at maps, looking at charts, looking at numbers, and maybe the records on the video tapes, but they are not looking at what is out there. Mr. Johnson asked Ms. Holt at the last listening session, "Transit is very important to you, isn't it?" Ms. Holt reported she could not answer him at the time because she was so upset and all she could do at the time was nod. Ms. Holt continued to tell Mr. Johnson that her autobiography is titled "Somebody Else Is Driving". Ms. Holt stated she has seventy-two chauffeurs and two of them are sitting in that corner (pointing to Transit Drivers Mr. Mick Ferrell and Mr. Brian Enata). They are the only ones that drive Ms. Holt anywhere. Ms. Holt explained if they don't go where she needs to go, because you tell them they have to go someplace else, then she cannot get to where she needs to go. Ms. Holt stated she has been riding these buses since she was fourteen years old and she is forty-nine years old now and she is not ashamed of it. She has spent thirty-five years on these buses and she stated she thinks she should know a little bit about what is going on. Ms. Holt asked how many of the people in the room really know what is going on regarding the bus. Ms. Holt thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Chairman Buchanan thanked Ms. Holt and asked Mr. Larry Dawson to speak.

Mr. Dawson stated he is bothered that the route restructure proposal wants to cut out the buses entering into parking lots. Mr. Dawson continued for a person such as himself, in a power chair, it makes it impossible to go anywhere in the winter time when there is snow or ice on the ground because the chairs do not get good traction. The chair will sit and spin on snow or ice. Mr. Dawson stated he lives at Phoenix Towers and if the bus doesn't come in the drive then he would have to go up the drive, which is on a hill, to the street and it is just impossible when there is snow or ice. Mr. Dawson would not be able to get to the bus. He would not be able to go anywhere. The bus is the only way he has to get around. Mr. Dawson reported a few weeks ago there was a snow storm and he had gone to his podiatrist. Mr. Dawson was waiting for the bus on the corner of Arcadia and McGraw Drive. Mr. Dawson was facing away from the wind, which was away from the street. When he heard the bus coming he started to wave for the driver to stop on the Orange H route. The driver drove right past Mr. Dawson leaving him stranded in the heavy wet snow storm. His chair would not turn fast enough to face him to the street in time. The driver must have misunderstood his wave, because he did not even slow down. Mr. Dawson was at a legitimate pick up spot and has been picked up there many times in the past. Perhaps the driver was not a regular driver for that route and was a relief driver, Mr. Dawson does not know. The bus did not even slow down and as a result Mr. Dawson was left out in the blowing snow another twenty or more minutes until a Special Service bus was sent out to get him. Mr. Dawson realizes it takes time to load and secure power chairs on the bus. The lifts and ramps take time. It takes about three or four minutes or longer to load a wheelchair. If there is more than one chair to load, then it multiplies that time. That is one of the reasons the buses often run late. Mr. Dawson takes that into consideration when planning on going somewhere. For example, just coming out here today, Mr. Dawson stated he arrived about two hours early just to be sure he would be here on time.

Chairman Buchanan thanked Mr. Dawson for his comments.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Buchanan noted a correction on the minutes of the March 23, 2013 Annual Meeting. The time the meeting was called to order should read 4:30 p.m. not 4:45 p.m.

Mr. Mike McCurdy found an error in the minutes of the March 23, 2013 Regular Meeting. On page five, Beaufort Street was misspelled as Beauford Street.

On a motion by Mr. Bill Wilson, and a second by Mr. McCurdy, the Trustees voted to approve the minutes of the March 23, 2013 Annual Meeting and the minutes of the March 23, 2013 Regular Meeting with the above mentioned corrections.

## **Items Removed From Consent Agenda**

### **Consent Agenda**

On a motion by Mr. McCurdy, and a second by Ms. Felicia Shaw, the Trustees voted to approve the consent agenda as presented including the following items:

- 1. Review and Approve April Disbursements**
- 2. Review and Approve February and March Financial Statements**
- 3. Review and Receive March Monthly Ridership Report**

### **Consent Agenda Discussion**

Mr. Wilson asked about the Disbursement line items regarding transfer of funds to Commerce Bank and the Express Services. Mr. Andrew Johnson, General Manager, responded the Express Services item is for the temporary employees, which should be winding down very soon. The primary reason for the transfer of funds from Illinois Funds US Bank to Commerce Bank is because we have not yet changed our depository relationship for our federal and State funds. We may be keeping the Illinois Funds account should the State change to direct deposit for our operating funds.

Mr. McCurdy asked about building maintenance expenses line item in the Income Statement with Approved Budget and why was that so high. Mr. Johnson explained that Bellas Landscaping and Snow Removal in the Disbursements falls under the Building Maintenance line item in the Budget.

### **Old Business**

#### **1. Review Transit System By-Laws**

Chairman Buchanan announced the By-Laws discussion will be postponed because she is still waiting for some clarification on several items. It will be postponed until the May or June meeting.

## **New Business**

### **1. Request for Approval of Bus Rebranding and Destination Sign OCU's for Gillig Buses**

Mr. Johnson stated it was always intended that we were going to complete the bus rebranding, decaling, and repainting over a period of time based on the budget. The same intention was for the plan to replace the operational control units for the destination signs on the buses. We found in the FY 2013 Budget we have freed up enough funds through fuel and insurance savings to move ahead with this and get everything accomplished now. We are able to accomplish this now also due to the fact that we finally have a few extra buses available so we can afford to take some off the street to get the work accomplished. We want to get this accomplished so we can have the unified brand out on the streets. The operational control units will bring all the destination signs up to the state of the art ability to control them and have the electronic messages uniform throughout the fleet.

Mr. Johnson continued the rebranding will cost \$45,910.00 and the OCU's will cost \$37,450.00. We will use the money saved in the fuel and insurance line items to rebrand the buses and operating funds in the fixed routes parts budget to complete the OCU's project.

Mr. McCurdy asked what kind of timeline we looking at with this project. Mr. Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director, stated all the buses, except for the one which will be repainted, should be completed by the end of this fiscal year. Painting the buses takes more time than applying the wrap decals. The bus must leave the facility to be painted. The company comes to the Transit to decal the buses on the premises.

On a motion by Mr. Ryan Whitehouse, and a second by Mr. McCurdy, the Trustees voted to approve the Bus Rebranding and Destination Sign OCU's for the Gillig Buses.

### **2. Discussion of Draft FY 2014 Operating Budget**

Chairman Buchanan stated Mr. Johnson has presented a summary and an outline of the proposed FY 2014 Connect Transit Operating Budget figures. It is not a detailed proposal. The Trustees may wish to go into detail and discussion in a special budget session or extend the May meeting. Chairman Buchanan continued what is in the proposal is strategic and contains proposals we have discussed to keep our Transit system proactive, moving forward, strong, and being available to our community. The proposal puts into place resources for goals and activities the Trustees have discussed.

Mr. Johnson stated over the last two years the Transit has gone through many changes and we have gained a better understanding of how the resources should be allocated. The Transit has taken a hard look at insurance and fuel purchases. Changes have been made such as more efficient and timely volume purchasing of repair parts and

preventative maintenance, thus reducing our reliance on outside sources for bus repair which have positively impacted our expenses. We have a unique opportunity to slightly decrease total expenses, increase locally-generated revenue, and decrease our reliance on State and Federal operating aid.

The savings have provided us with the opportunity to propose strategic budget increases that will allow the Transit to improve customer service, raise additional revenue, improve community relations and Transit System image, meet increased regulatory requirements, and make the most of the new technology that has been implemented. To achieve these strategic goals the proposal is requesting the establishment of several new positions. Mr. Johnson believes the positions are realistic, sustainable, and critical to the continued success of Connect Transit. We need more staff if we want to grow and develop the Transit. The new positions will assist in building better community relationships, increase awareness, and assist in generating new revenue sources. Adding the new positions will help foster better relationships and a more immediate reaction relationship with our organized labor. They will also assist with getting more local support for funding should our federal and State funding fall short.

Mr. Johnson stated, aside from the addition of seven positions, there are no big changes or surprises in the budget. Several line items have been reallocated. Pre-purchasing and bulk purchasing of parts for buses has eliminated the last minute ordering of parts, which came with enormous express shipping fees. We also are seeing decreases in insurance costs. The fuel purchasing contract continues to save the Transit money. Mr. Johnson continued we are expecting to see solid increases in the operating revenue from the previous budget. Tightening up the security on the university passes has resulted in increased revenue. We expect to see increases in our contract fares according to the trend. If positions are added we would also have advertising revenue to add to the list of revenue.

Mr. Johnson announced the Governor has just made a proposal which would severely impact our budget. He proposed that downstate transit systems should limit their 2014 spending to what they actually spent in 2012. This would result in over \$1 million decrease to our funding. Mr. Johnson does not expect that to happen, however, that is the warning shot that has been fired. The Illinois Public Transit Association is negotiating with key staffers in the Assembly for a way to limit the automatic 10% increase in downstate operating assistance. That was implemented during Governor Rod Blagojevich's administration. Automatic 10% increases clearly are not sustainable forever and IPTA is looking for a realistic way to fund downstate transit which takes into consideration realistic appropriations. Transit systems need to know ahead of time exactly how much money they will receive and be able to plan accordingly. Connect Transit doesn't expect to see any significant changes in our funding going into 2014.

Mr. Johnson believes this is a very fair and realistic budget. Mr. Johnson stated the proposed budget reflects steps for achieving long term success for the Transit, given the current funding opportunities available. Staff is prepared to make necessary adjustments to deal with any funding situation that could change at any time. Mr. Johnson continued

this budget and the addition of the new positions will move Connect Transit to greater levels of success in the future.

The positions are as follows:

Maintenance Supervisor: This position will supervise night maintenance crew, ensuring proper overnight preventative maintenance and cleaning of buses and facilities as well as allowing the department management to devote more time to meeting the time-consuming new FTA State of Good Repair reporting and oversight requirements.

Mechanic: Connect Transit has added new paratransit buses and used fixed route buses, resulting in a net increase in the number of vehicles that must be maintained. In order to keep up with the preventative maintenance and repair maintenance needs of the fleet we will need an additional mechanic.

Business Development Manager: This position will function as a relationship manager/salesperson for the Transit. The employee will be tasked with growing the existing revenue relationships Connect Transit has with institutions and corporations in the area as well as cultivate and formalize new revenue-generating opportunities. This position will manage bus advertising as well. It is expected that this position will be revenue-neutral within the first year and be revenue-positive in the following years.

Executive Assistant-Labor Relations: This position will provide confidential administrative support to the General Manager and Human Resources Director. The Position will function as the critical point of contact for all organized labor communications with management and provide administrative support for all organized labor negotiations as well as management labor relations strategy and planning.

Planning and Grants Manager: The Transit does not have a position dedicated to analyzing Transit System service operations and planning changes to routes and schedules. These tasks are currently performed by current members of staff over and above their other full-time duties. This position will be trained in transit planning and dedicated to performing those tasks. This position will also locate grant opportunities to fund service, prepare the grant applications, and assist in the operating and capital budgeting process.

Information Technology Manager: Connect Transit has implemented an impressive amount of technology in just eighteen months. It requires maintenance which is very labor intensive. Current staff devotes a significant amount of time to website management, coordination with technology vendors for training, software updates, and resolution of problems that might arise in the operation of the equipment and software. This position would be dedicated to maintaining all of our technology platforms. The employee would gain a solid understanding of each application and be able to troubleshoot routine problems as well as keep all software up to date. When problems are more significant, the employee will be able to "speak the language" and use established relationships with vendor staff that will result in quick resolutions of all issues.

This will eliminate the extended internal and external customer service issues that we have encountered in the past with malfunctioning equipment and software.

External Affairs Manager: This position will manage customer outreach through Transit System involvement in community events, social media, website content, and traditional media. This position will also function as a Transit System spokesperson and assist in government relations. The Transit System currently has no employee devoted to the critical task of promoting Connect Transit's image and spreading its message throughout the community. This position will fill that void.

Mr. Whitehouse asked about the Information Technology Manager position. In his organization that position is out sourced with an on-call service. Mr. Johnson replied we out source our technology now, however due to all our newly acquired transit specific software, it is very difficult to trouble shoot and work with different technical support personnel when they don't understand the industry specific software. We would like this manager to completely understand the software and how it relates to our transit needs. This manager would know who to call to get the problem fixed, and get the system back on line. Currently, the problem falls on another staff member to try to figure out the problem as well as handle their day to day work load. We need quicker response times and solutions to our day to day problems. We also need someone to handle the content and manage our new web site. The position will need to facilitate relationships with the software vendors and our contracted technology support company and have enough knowledge and skill to handle the small issues on sight and fix them before they become major issues.

Chairman Buchanan acknowledged the budget will require extra time for the Trustees to review. Chairman Buchanan will send out an email to find out if the majority would like to extend the May meeting or add a special meeting in May to discuss the proposed budget. The Trustees need to understand the budget, be comfortable with it, and be able to explain it. It is a very important responsibility of the Trustees.

Mr. Johnson stated we will be about a month late getting the budget to the State as the timeline looks now and we do not want to have the budget approved just a few days before the fiscal year begins. Mr. Johnson stressed the Trustees need to get the budget finalized in May.

Mr. McCurdy inquired if there are final changes made during the May meeting will that still allow enough time to make the changes and get it to the State before the end of the month. Mr. Johnson responded that last minute changes should not be a problem.

Mr. Whitehouse suggested extending the May meeting as May is a busy month. Mr. Bill Wilson commented the areas of controlling expenses have been dealt with and discussed with the Board continually throughout the year. The budget is impressive and positive to see. The brief descriptions of the new positions are compelling, but considering the number of new positions suggested and the new types of work, in many respects, will require further discussion and thought.



Mr. Johnson responded it is bold and he would be more concerned if the Board just "rubber stamped" the proposal.

Mr. John Thomas would like to see what the revenue trade off would be, cost versus benefit.

Mr. Whitehouse asked about the Business Development Manager in regards to the statement, "It is expected that this position will be revenue-neutral within the first year and be revenue-positive in the following years." Is this just speculation or are there numbers you can share with the Trustees in regards to that? Mr. Johnson responded the position is not worth much if it is not carrying its own weight and more. The opportunities are out there and the time line is not unrealistic. Mr. Thomas added this should be true for the Planning and Grants Manager position also.

## **General Manager's Report**

### **1. State and Federal Update**

Mr. Johnson stated there are questions about how the Illinois Downstate Operating Assistance is going to be changed in the future. We expect the assembly is going to keep things "status quo". The good news is that Bloomington Normal Transit typically does not utilize all the funds that are afforded to it. We received almost one million dollars when we asked for it for 2013 and we are not going to use it. Even if cuts are made, unless they are targeting specific transit systems, we are still going to have some breathing room.

On the federal side, Map-21 authorized spending levels at a certain amount and then the House attempted to appropriate less money than what was authorized. The Senate fixed that, but these types of actions may happen again in the future. Current authorization expires September 2014 and chances are there will not be a new authorization until 2015 or 2016. If they continue to fund at the Map-21 level we will be in great shape on the operating side, but it means that our capital bus facilities program will continue to suffer. We may be able to pool the money we get over the next several years and purchase something we need.

Mr. Johnson stated he attended an American Public Transit Association Authorization Task Force meeting several weeks ago and learned they are intending to protect smaller transits, such as ours, in their recommendation to the House and the Senate by stating that no less than 15% of capital funding will go to smaller transit systems. This could result in a decent discretionary capital program for us. Mr. Johnson stated it seems APTA is getting close to having a recommendation, but the biggest problem is just getting someone to listen to it.

At the federal level the attention and discussion is currently on guns and immigration. Currently on the operation side it is looking good. On the capital side the challenge is

getting the authorization from the State and federal governments to actually spend the money we already have rather than getting additional money.

## **2. IDOT Capital Grant**

Mr. Johnson reported the Governor recently announced the \$12 billion bus spending program. Connect Transit did have a couple line items in that: one for \$3 million for buses and one for \$30,000.00 for equipment. The question now remains as to how it will be funded. Until the money is obligated we will hold off on any plans for those funds. Mr. Johnson remains hopeful that it will be funded as the new buses are critical to our continued service.

Mr. Whitehouse reported when he was in Springfield last week the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate both commented that no one knows where this money will come from and the budget office says that within eighteen months they are hoping the federal government will appropriate 80% to 85% of that amount. Congress states we have a new transportation bill and we are not going to give anything else. Yet the Governor says more money is coming. Mr. Whitehouse stated he would not hold his breath waiting for funds.

Mr. Johnson added we can hope the majority of the money that is set aside for the Downstate Capital Improvement Program is money that was left over from the Downstate Operating Assistance. If funds were truly kept separate, maybe the money will be there. There are no promises. Mr. Johnson will keep alert to the possibilities and keep the Trustees informed. There is no federal money right now. The new TIGER funding has a minimum of \$10 million. This building did not cost that. Once again the smaller transit systems are hard pressed to get some of the money that is available.

## **3. Bus Purchases**

Mr. Johnson commented the Trustees approved a purchase of five new buses in October 2012. We have yet to get authorization to spend that money in order to get the buses. We have located a "piggy back" contract which we think will work. The regional council at the Federal Transit Administration is currently reviewing it. Hopefully, that arrangement will give us approval to pursue the "piggy back" contract. Mr. Johnson continued we will personally take it to Chicago to go over all the parts of the local concurrence if we need to, just to be sure there are no questions about what forms are needed and what information needs to be turned in.

Mr. McCurdy inquired about the changes in the "piggy back" rules which would make it more difficult for transits to participate in those arrangements. Mr. Johnson responded a "Dear Colleague" letter went out that cast doubt over the majority of "piggy back" contracts. It is definitely a warning to transits to be very careful if pursuing this type of agreement. This is why we are going to the FTA and requesting that an approval be put in writing. Mr. Johnson continued the "piggy back" we found is a state wide contract out of Minnesota that can clearly justify all the optional buses that were put in the contract

and they can clearly justify why some of the buses were not needed. Mr. Johnson stated "piggy back" contracts are preferable to doing full scale procurement. They still promote competition and fulfill all the letters of the law. "Piggy backing" allows transits to standardize their fleets. That way the drivers and mechanics are already familiar to those buses and the parts on the shelf fit.

### **School District Unit 5**

Mr. Johnson reported Unit 5 wishes to partner with the Transit to promote the Bus System in the schools, primarily the schools with the demographics where one would see higher usage of the bus. The students would be educated how to ride the bus, thus creating life-long riders. It is still in the early stages. We hope to get a meeting with Unit 5 very soon. We have the desire to get into the schools to teach students how to ride the bus and eliminate any anxieties about riding the bus. Hopefully, teaching the students to ride will be infectious to the rest of the family.

### **Correspondence and Media**

#### **Trustee Comments**

Chairman Buchanan welcomed Ms. Felicia Shaw as the newly appointed Trustee. Chairman Buchanan asked Ms. Shaw to tell the Trustees about herself.

Ms. Shaw stated she works full time at State Farm and has been employed there for roughly eighteen years. Ms. Shaw continued she has worked a great deal in community development and grass roots organizations on how to create sustainable communities. Ms. Shaw held up the pages from Ms. Holt's handout referring to the West Bloomington Neighborhood Plan and stated she remembers when the West Bloomington Neighborhood Plan and the West Bloomington Revitalization Project were being studied and developed to see change happen on Bloomington's west side because she sat on a committee working on that project. Ms. Shaw believes in giving back to the community. She admits at times she can get very heavily involved, but she has seen great results. Ms. Shaw stated working with State Farm gives her an opportunity to see the other side of those challenges, whether using marketing dollars, philanthropy, or providing opportunities for people to serve in order to accomplish the goal. Ms. Shaw continued she does a great deal of community development with State Farm as well. Outside of work, Ms. Shaw continued, she has her own company. She has her own radio show, her second book was just released last month, and her third book will be coming out in June. Ms. Shaw is also a life coach and a motivational speaker. Ms. Shaw has children and a husband. Ms. Shaw is privileged and excited to have this opportunity to serve on the Board. Ms. Shaw has a teenager who uses the bus and she remembers riding with her to help her daughter understand how the bus system works. Ms. Shaw understands how important the bus system is to the members of our communities and the businesses. The Transit is a very important to having a sustainable community. Ms. Shaw is glad to have the opportunity to serve on the Board and she will give 126%! Ms. Shaw is anxious to get State Farm excited and engaged in Connect Transit. In fact, Ms. Shaw stated she has already stated having Transit conversations at work.

Chairman Buchanan reported the Study Group met this morning. The meeting was probably their last "face to face" meeting. The Study Group has been meeting through extensive conference calls. The Group is getting very close to wrapping up their business and bringing their report of recommendations to the Board. The Study Group anticipates having a final report ready for the May Board Meeting. Chairman Buchanan stated the Board may request one of the Study Group members to present the report to the Trustees. The Group is very aware of what the Board has requested them to do in terms of sustaining the system, reaching out to all segments of the communities, and being the best we can be within the constraints we have. They are looking at the current revenue, options to generate new revenue, education, impact, value of transit to the communities and businesses, contracts, and communication. The Group hopes to come back to the Board with some recommendations as well as recommendations for some on-going study. They identified some individuals who could perhaps help with statistics for the study process. Chairman Buchanan is very hopeful and optimistic about the report. The Study Group is comprised of a very broad base of people, representing many different segments of the communities.

Chairman Buchanan stated she and Mr. Johnson have met with Mr. Dan Layzell, Illinois State University Vice President for Finance and Planning, and Ms. Deb Smitley, the Senior Associate Vice President for Finance and Planning. We will meet on a quarterly basis to discuss Connect Transit's relationship with ISU and introduce the new ISU President to Connect Transit and the services we provide to the University and the communities. Chairman Buchanan believes these discussions will be very helpful as we continue discussion of contracts for ISU bus services. It is anticipated the quarterly meetings will increase our mutual understanding of the services provided, services needed, service availability and accessibility, and the costs of the services. The intent is to continue to grow and enhance the working partnership.

Chairman Buchanan stated we will get to Strategic Planning at a future meeting. We wanted to have Ms. Shaw on the Board before moving forward with that. That will probably be a Saturday session. Chairman Buchanan will contact Mr. John Bowman and Mr. John Thomas to prepare a review of the previous plan to help better understand where we might go from there. The Study Group concluded the past Strategic Planning was a good starting point but needs to continue on from there. The Strategic Planning will be a facilitated session. If anyone has a suggestion for a facilitator please get that information to Mr. Johnson or Chairman Buchanan.

Mr. McCurdy wanted to commend Connect Transit for the recent outreach efforts at State Farm Earth Day Expo at Corporate South. The conversations were productive and the one-on-one contacts are very valuable. Mr. McCurdy reported Mr. Roy Rickert, Operations Director, and Mr. Chris Wold, Operations Supervisor did a great job. It was also nice to see Connect Transit at the IWU Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo as well. It helps to raise the profile of the Transit and it is a great opportunity to be able to talk to someone who is helping run the System. Transit promotion at State Farm brought about a new awareness to some employees who were unaware they could ride the bus for free. Mr. Johnson added we will also be attending the Twin City Showcase and the May 4<sup>th</sup> Farmer's Market.

Mr. McCurdy helps to administer the "Good to Go" Program. It is a year round sustainable transportation project. Mr. McCurdy reported they conducted a survey of past participants to the "Commuter Challenge". In the survey they found there was a 6% increase in bus ridership of those who participated in the challenge compared to before participating in the "Commuter Challenge". Actually getting on the bus and using the bus led to increased usage after the "Commuter Challenge". The survey also indicated some areas of additional work that needs to take place. The bus ranked fifth in the list of mode of transportation used by the "Commuter Challenge" participants. Mr. McCurdy will pass along a copy of the report to Mr. Johnson. Chairman Buchanan asked if Mr. McCurdy could also pass along an electronic copy of the report to all the Board Members.

Mr. Wilson inquired if there was a schedule for the route restructuring that we are following. Mr. Johnson responded we are hoping to have the draft of the route restructuring by the end of the week. After that been vetted a bit we will schedule the open houses to discuss the schedule. At this point the routes are more of a hybrid of streamlining existing routes and some adjustments to the previous proposal but nothing quite as dramatic as the previous proposal. We should have something to show the Board very soon. Mr. McCurdy asked if there was a time frame for the open houses. Mr. Johnson responded we need to be scheduling them in May and we will be giving appropriate notice.

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

On a motion by Mr. Thomas, and a second by Mr. Wilson, the Board voted to adjourn the public meeting and commence an Executive Session to discuss personnel matters at 5:35 p.m.

#### **Reconvene**

Subsequently, the Board voted to adjourn the executive session and reconvene the public meeting at 5:55 pm.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further public business, on a motion and a second, the Trustees voted to adjourn the public meeting at 5:56 p.m.

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John M. Bowman, Secretary