

CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
October 22, 2013

The regular meeting of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at the Connect Transit Board Room #135, Normal, Illinois on October 22, 2013 at 4:30 p.m.

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

TRUSTEES ABSENT:

CITY MANAGERS: Mark Peterson, Town of Normal

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
Jenifer Clark, Human Resources Director
Patrick Kuebrich, Finance Director
Roy Rickert, Operations Director
Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager
Steve Stockton, Information Technology Director
Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: David R. Calhoon, Vice-President ATU 752
Marilyn Evans, Rider, CEFT Member
Joan Fenton, Rider, Phoenix Towers Resident
Scott Fowler, McLean County Regional Planning
Gary May, Driver ATU Member
Rachel Wells, Pantagraph

Call to Order

Ms. Judy Buchanan, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 4:33 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Chairman Buchanan acknowledged and congratulated Mr. Roy Rickert, Operations Director, on his recent graduation from the American Public Transportation Association Leadership Program. Mr. Rickert was part of a prestigious group of 25 individuals chosen

from a competitive pool of applicants to be in the Leadership APTA Class. Mr. Rickert made the presentation for his group's paper, "Cyber Security". Mr. Johnson, General Manager, added Mr. Rickert represented Connect Transit very well to the entire transit community of this country.

Public Comments

Ms. Marilyn Evans introduced herself and stated she is a member of the Committee to Ensure Fair Transit (CEFT) and lives at 710 West Orlando in Normal. She explained she was asked come to the meeting today to represent the president of CEFT, Mr. Charles Smith, who was unable to attend due to illness. Ms. Evans stated she wanted to ensure the Trustees knew that the members of CEFT were in no way involved with the incident yesterday where irate riders threw eggs at a bus driver and broke a bus door window. CEFT would personally meet with staff to work out any problems or issues they might be having.

Ms. Evans noted there are still problems with dispatch. CEFT is very glad the bus is still going through the shopping parking lots. Ms. Evans believes the problem is mainly the pedestrians more than the vehicles. The pedestrians appear oblivious to the vehicles in the parking lots. She would like to find a way to work with the pedestrians in the parking lots.

Ms. Evans mentioned she was listening to WJBC Radio the other day and T.J. Hart was on the air explaining he was using transit because his car quit. Mr. Hart mentioned he has ridden on many transit systems around the country and he had many good things to say about Connect Transit while he was on the air and that he was pleased with the system.

Ms. Evans questioned what was coming in Phase II of the route restructure and when might it begin. Ms. Evans has really enjoys learning about the transit and speaking for many of her fellow senior and disabled citizens. Ms. Evans thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Chairman Buchanan thanked Ms. Evans for her comments and stated she would never think Mr. Smith or Ms. Evans would be responsible for egging one of our buses.

Mr. Johnson added staff recently met with some members of CEFT and discussed each parking lot is being evaluated individually. Mr. Johnson stated staff is currently in the planning stages for Phase II. The same process of Listening Sessions and Open Houses will be followed for Phase II. The result will not surprise anyone unless they are totally ignoring the news media and all the opportunities to learn about the changes and voice concerns or questions. There will be plenty of opportunity for riders to get involved. Staff will be working on the changes over the winter and will ensure any changes will happen over the warm weather months.

Ms. Evans added she wished to thank Connect Transit for the Heartland Express route that was recently added. Ms. Evans said it has really made a difference in ridership.

Mr. Johnson responded we really need to thank Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director, Mr. Roy Rickert and other members of the Transportation Staff who came up with the idea for the route.

Ms. Joan Fenton introduced herself and stated the residence at Phoenix Towers agree with Ms. Evans that they appreciate the very good service the transit has provided them throughout the years. Ms. Fenton stated she met with Bloomington Mayor Renner yesterday about the concerns residents of Phoenix Towers have with the change in the bus stop location. Ms. Fenton continued Mayor Renner asked her to tell the Board and staff that he is "now aware of the problems the residents are having at Phoenix Towers getting to the bus stop". Ms. Fenton explained today she got to the bus stop and had to stand in the rain and cold wind waiting for the bus. She commented she is able to get up the hill to the bus stop, but she does not have to use a walker, cane, or wheelchair. Many of the residents are elderly and disabled and are concerned when winter comes that the snow and ice may make the trip to the bus stop very hazardous or impossible for them. Ms. Fenton reiterated Mayor Renner wants Connect Transit to know he is concerned about the situation and he will be in touch. Ms. Fenton thanked the Trustees for listening.

Chairman Buchanan responded the Mayor has already reached out to Connect Transit and they will keep in contact with Mayor Renner.

Approval of Minutes of Strategic Planning Session, September 21, 2013

On a motion by Mr. Mike McCurdy, and a second by Mr. Bill Wilson, the Board voted to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2013 Strategic Planning Session as presented.

Approval of Minutes of Previous Regular Meeting September 24, 2013

On a motion by Mr. John Bowman, and a second by Ms. Felicia Shaw, the Trustees voted to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2013 regular meeting as presented.

Items Removed from Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda

Mr. McCurdy announced he will abstain to vote on any items that deal specifically with WGLT Radio Station.

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

- 1. Review and Approve October Disbursements**
- 2. Review and Receive August and September Financial Reports**
- 3. Review and Receive August and September Capital and Self-Insurance Reserve Fund Balances**
- 4. Review and Receive September Monthly Statistical Report**

Consent Agenda Discussion

Mr. Bowman inquired for clarification about the disbursement item payee Brian A. Finch, for appraisal services in the amount of \$2,500.00. Mr. Johnson responded the appraisal was of the Oakland Avenue property. Mr. Johnson explained there has been some recent interest in the property and considering recent market changes we needed an up to date appraisal. Mr. Johnson expects the Federal Transit Administration will inspect any sale and to be ahead of the game a new appraisal was done. Mr. Johnson stated FTA has given the system official approval to sell the property and retain all the proceeds from any sale. Since FTA holds an interest in the property they need to review any sale and be comfortable with the terms and the price is fair. This is the third appraisal in the last five years on this property. Mr. Johnson stated there are two interested parties in the property and proposals will be taken rather than setting a price and marketing the property. The funds from the sale of the property will be used for capital purchases such as funding for buses and transfer center improvements throughout the system.

Mr. Ryan Whitehouse asked about the different medical reimbursement items listed with the disbursements. Mr. Johnson explained those were all part of Connect Transits' Co-Insurance Medical Reimbursement Plan to individual employees.

Mr. Bowman asked for clarification on the two disbursement items listed for internet, Comcast Cable and Illinois State University CIRBN. Mr. Steve Stockton, Information Technology Director, explained there remains one and a half months on the internet contract with Comcast Cable and then the system will only be using ISU CIRBN. Mr. Stockton did state the transit will need to have a small Frontier package to be a back-up in case the CIRBN goes down, as it has several times in the past month. Mr. Stockton noted he will have a meeting with ISU CIRBN tomorrow to make sure they are active and will be reliable enough.

Mr. Bowman inquired about the different Visa items on the disbursement list; some are Commerce Bank Visa and some just Visa. Mr. Bowman thought the Trustees voted to go with all Commerce Bank Visa. Mr. Johnson responded the Board did agree to go with all Commerce Bank Visa cards. The other Visa entries are some old bills that still needed to be paid. This should be the last time the old Visa cards show up on the disbursement list as those cards have been retired.

Mr. Bowman asked about the Capital Account item of \$800,000.00 Commerce Bank transfer to operating account. Is this a loan to operating? Mr. Johnson explained due to

the recent federal government shut down and the delay in payments from the state the system has had to borrow money from the Capital Account and put it into Operating Account. Mr. Johnson stated we expect to receive a check from the state next week.

Old Business

Mr. Johnson stated there is no old business.

New Business

Mr. Johnson stated there is no new business.

General Manager's Report

1. Personnel Update

Mr. Johnson introduced Mr. Steve Stockton, Information Technology Director, to the Trustees. Mr. Johnson stated Mr. Stockton comes from the Pantagraph and has been with Connect Transit just over one month. Mr. Stockton will report to Mr. Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director.

Mr. Johnson introduced Ms. Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager to the Trustees. Ms. Sorenson comes from State Farm and Arizona State University and is excited to start her career with Connect Transit. Ms. Sorenson started October 15th and will report to Ms. Jenifer Clark.

Mr. Bowman asked if the Board asked if the Board could expect to see an updated administration organization chart. Mr. Johnson responded yes, absolutely.

2. Miscellaneous Item

Mr. Johnson explained ArrivalStar Technology was causing trouble by suing transits, large and small, that were using notifying next bus arrival time technology. Fortunately, the American Public Transportation Association hired attorneys to sue ArrivalStar and take the issue to federal court, arguing that its patents are invalid. The settlement covers all APTA members. Mr. Johnson continued to explain the company is a "patent troll" trying to extort a license fee and targeting municipalities, civic organizations, public entities, and others who provide bus arrival data obtained via GPS that was purchased to improve service for taxpayers. Mr. Johnson stated this is one of the benefits of belonging to APTA. Connect Transit does not have to worry about this issue; APTA has taken care of the problem.

3. Report on New Generator

Mr. Johnson reported Mr. Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director, has been working on getting the new generator over the past three weeks. The pad has been poured and the generator is in place. It needs to be hooked up and a wall needs to be built around it. Mr. Johnson stated during the time all this work has been going on the office has lost power several times. The generator is a critical component to keep operations running during power outages. The phones, radios, computers, lights are all dependent on power. Mr. Johnson explained very old federal money was repurposed and used for this purchase.

4. Bus Procurement

Mr. Johnson stated staff got tired of trying to work with the federal government on a "piggy back" bus purchase agreement and decided to create a joint procurement, which we are the lead system on. That procurement now has over 200 buses with a majority of Illinois properties taking part. There are also properties from Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota participating. Mr. Thorne is getting the final details completed and then the system will get concurrence from the state and move forward from there. Connect Transit has put in for twenty-five buses on this procurement. We are currently funded for only fifteen buses, but we don't have to buy the extra buses if they are not needed. Having the extra buses listed gives us more options. Being the lead system on this procurement will ensure Connect Transit gets buses first, probably in less than a year. Having a larger order does have advantages.

5. Update on Transportation Authorization Bill

Mr. Johnson reported the newest Transportation Authorization Bill had provisions for increase regulation of safety and asset management. During the government shut-down, the Federal Transit Administration managed to get the notice of proposed rulemaking out of the bill. Mr. Johnson stated Connect Transit is reviewing the proposed rules and will be making comments on the impact they will have on a system our size. Mr. Johnson continued some of the regulations appear to be onerous. Connect Transit will be ready to comply with the regulations and take advantage of any funding opportunities that may be available for those systems that comply with those regulations. Staff is going through the rather large document. There are just seventy days left to respond. The asset management deals with lots of reporting, tracking, and administrative and overhead work. On the asset management side the government is putting strict regulations on the overseers as well. The present administration wants a small backlog of State of Good Repair projects. The government does not want to see that buses and other infrastructure are backlogged. Mr. Johnson feels the new regulations will stretch the limits on buses. What was once considered a twelve year bus will now become

a fifteen year bus and twelve years will be the new minimum life expectancy. Mr. Johnson reported when he was in Chicago he approached the bus manufacturers and asked them to get in contact with those in charge to explain the longer life expectancies on these buses just won't hold up in the Midwest. Mr. Johnson is hopeful the bus manufacturers will take the lead on this issue. Connect Transit will keep a watchful eye on this matter.

Mr. Bowman asked about the progress of the rebuilds of engines and transmissions on the buses. Mr. Johnson responded there are still a few buses that need the rebuilds. It has been a slow, constant process.

Mr. Johnson reported the used 45' buses from California are on the streets and being used mostly for shuttles around ISU. The updated equipment and destination signs are being installed in these buses as well.

6. Ridership Statistics from the Route Restructure

Mr. John Thomas inquired about ridership now that the new route restructure and the students have been in town for several months. Mr. Johnson responded the ridership has been flat lately. Staff is working on what could be done to increase ridership. The best part is we are not getting any complaints about the buses running late which means the restructure is accomplishing what the system was striving to accomplish. The Heartland Express is making a big difference.

Mr. Thomas noted the Teal J route has increased ridership 21% but it is still not up to the standard ten boardings per hour. Mr. Johnson commented the system is very happy with the progress the Teal J is making and very happy with the response coming from State Farm regarding the Teal J route. Based on preliminary discussions transit has had with State Farm we are expecting more ridership from individuals using that route to get to Corporate South and other areas in the future. It is still early in the discussion.

Mr. Thomas inquired if the crowded buses that were an issue before are not as big a problem since the route restructure. Mr. Johnson responded the crowding has eased up, but we do have some minor crowding issues at times.

Mr. Bowman wished to address the metrics on the bus routes and the numbers that have been provided in the report. Mr. Bowman noticed the revenue hours for the Teal J are the same for September 2013 as for September 2012 but it is running an hour and a half less per day. Mr. Bowman stated that information makes him wonder if we are getting accurate numbers on what the true increase would be for the Teal J. The other item Mr. Bowman expresses concern about was the technology and the DoubleMap tablets going blank and losing all the counts when that happens. Mr. Johnson explained the counters on the buses work through the

tablets so when the tablet goes down the count is lost. Mr. Johnson continued the problem seems to be that the tablets work through Sprint and we are finding dead spots in the coverage. When a bus hits a dead spot the tablet reboots. There are some areas in the community with multiple dead spots where the tablet won't reboot properly. Staff has been working with the vendor on this for several months and even had a representative here for several days riding the bus to actually witness the dead spots. Mr. Johnson stated he has followed up with letters and phone calls allowing the vendor until this Friday to come up with a plan or solution for this problem. Ultimately, Mr. Johnson wants the vendor to switch to a different carrier for the internet access.

Mr. Johnson reported the passenger counter representatives are here this week doing some installations on buses and also giving staff more insight as to how the loss of ridership data can be avoided. The ridership data in a system serving a population community of less than two hundred thousand is not as critical as that of a larger community. Obviously it does not help to be losing ridership data and hopefully this problem will be resolved soon because any loss is unacceptable. Mr. Bowman added it limits the assurance that can be placed on the numbers and it can't really be verified that they are good numbers. Mr. Johnson stated the numbers are largely accurate. With any transit system the ridership count is not completely accurate. Mr. Johnson continued this problem will be fixed very soon.

Mr. Bowman inquired if electronic fareboxes would help with this problem. Mr. Johnson responded the electronic fareboxes would aid the process; however it would not be the total solution, depending on what farebox system is used. Connect Transit does have electronic fareboxes and electronic fare collection system in the Transportation Improvement Plan for next year.

Correspondence and Media

Trustee Comments

Mr. McCurdy was able to attend the American Public Transportation Association conference this year. Mr. McCurdy was impressed to learn the roll that transit plays in a community as a leader and how transit can shape and change a community. A bus route can increase property values, amenities can improve the amount a business can charge for retail space. There was a great deal of discussion about millennials, people 16 to 24 year old, who are choosing their transportation options depending on the trip they need to make. The discussions dealt with appealing to millennials, catering to their needs, the challenges and opportunities they present. Mr. McCurdy reported he also attended some discussions about media. Mr. McCurdy wished to echo Chairman Buchanan's congratulations to Mr. Rickert for his APTA Leadership Graduation. Mr. McCurdy enjoyed watching Mr. Rickert on the big screen make his presentation to the crowd. Mr. McCurdy added it was great to see Mr. Johnson leading some discussions as well.

Chairman Buchanan announced the November Board Meeting is on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Chairman Buchanan suggested starting the meeting an hour earlier for the Trustees to allow for a work session before the meeting begins to discuss funding options and goals for the General Manager and work group recommendations. Unless there is a conflict with the Trustees schedules the meeting would begin at 3:30 p.m. The Trustees were agreeable with that plan.

Chairman Buchanan mentioned she has asked Ms. Shaw to join the ad hoc advocacy committee. Mr. Whitehouse, Mr. McCurdy, and Ms. Shaw will be working with policy makers at the local, state, and federal levels making sure they are aware of what the transit contributes to the community, what the needs are, and how the policy makers' decisions impact transit.

Chairman Buchanan stated the other ad hoc committee members will be Mr. Thomas, Mr. Wilson, and Chairman Buchanan herself. This committee will be working on putting together a Board Manual. This manual can be a ready reference for current Trustees as well as containing helpful introductory information for newly appointed Trustees. The manual should be ready for Trustee review and approval next spring.

Mr. McCurdy asked if the work session will allow time for discussion about the ad hoc committees. Chairman Buchanan responded the work session will only be an hour before the November meeting and with the other items being discussed; funding and General Manager Goals, there probably won't be enough time.

Mr. Whitehouse wished to comment on the letter in the packet from the resident at Anglers Manor expressing concern that those residents now must navigate to street where there are no shelters or benches, no protection from the elements. Mr. Whitehouse also referred to Ms. Fenton's comments regarding similar issues at Phoenix Towers. This issue has been a concern of Mr. Whitehouse for some time and he has mentioned it in past Board Meetings. Mr. Whitehouse stated he knows this is a concern of Mayor Renner's as well. Mr. Whitehouse understands it costs money and takes time, but has the Transit moved forward with getting shelters and benches for these housing complexes? Is it a funding issue? Mr. Johnson responded it is not so much a funding issue as it is working with the management of the two facilities. Mr. Johnson stated this is not solely the transit's responsibility. The fact that people have a problem getting out of the building in anything other than in a motor vehicle is a problem for the facility management as well. Mr. Johnson continued a staff member went to Angler's Manor last week for a meeting and was not even let in the door and was told it was not a good time. Mr. Johnson stated staff is working to meet with management and beat the bad weather so if concrete needs to be poured; there is still time to get it done. Mr. Johnson continued staff is ready to move forward on this very quickly if we can just get the cooperation of the management of the facilities. Hopefully there will be some movement in the next day or two.

Mr. Bowman inquired about the grant for doing the study on bus stops and shelters. Mr. Johnson responded that grant was just made available to Connect Transit. Staff will be putting out an RFP soon to get a consultant hired for that study. Mr. Johnson continued the shelters at Phoenix Towers and Angler's Manor are definitely needed regardless of the study being done or not.

Mr. McCurdy asked about the progress on the RFP for the new website. Mr. Johnson stated the RFP is being worked on now in conjunction with our Community Relations Manager and the Information Technology Manager. Mr. Johnson is expecting the system will have a new website up and running by the end of the first quarter of 2014. That is the goal.

Request for Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters

On a motion by Mr. Wilson, and a second by Ms. Shaw, the Board voted to adjourn the public meeting and go into Executive Session to Discuss Personnel Matters at 5:35 p.m.

Reconvene

Subsequently, on a motion by Mr. Thomas, and a second by Ms. Shaw, the Board Reconvened the public meeting at 7:18 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further public business, on a motion by Mr. Wilson, and a second by Mr. Whitehouse, the Trustees voted to adjourn the public meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Mike McCurdy, Secretary