

**CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PROCEEDINGS OF JANUARY 23, 2018**

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 January 23, 2018 at 4:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Mike McCurdy, Chairman
Ryan Whitehouse, Vice Chairman
Judy Buchanan
Jennifer McDade
John Thomas
Monica Bullington
Mark Peterson

TRUSTEES ABSENT: John Bowman (arrived at 4:33 p.m.)

CITY MANAGERS: Steve Rasmussen, Interim City Manager of Town of Bloomington
Mark Peterson, City Manager of Town of Normal

STAFF PRESENT: Isaac Thorne, General Manager

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike McCurdy at 4:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Before we move on to public comment, I would like to welcome Monica Bullington as our new Connect Transit Trustee at her first regular meeting. Thank you for agreeing to serve.

We have two (2) public comments. First is Stacy Tutt.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Stacy Tutt addressed the Board by thanking Connect Transit for participation in the recent Joint Meeting with the City Council and the Public Library and its willingness to engage.

Justin Boyd, Chair of the Bloomington Planning Commission and a Member of the Downtown Task Force, personally thanked the Board and stated that The Downtown Task Force is excited about this project and appreciates the Board's willingness to have a conversation about it. Mr. Boyd expressed that by the Board's willingness to come to the table for discussion, it will help with collaboration in the future.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting of November 28, 2017
2. Disbursements for Month of November and December, 2017
3. Financial Report for Month of November and December, 2017
4. Capital and Self-Insurance Reserve Fund Balances for month of November and December, 2017
5. Monthly Statistical Report for month of November and December, 2017
6. Federal Report for Connect Transit – Prepared by Cardinal Infrastructure

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Trustee John Thomas that the Consent Agenda of the November 28, 2017 Board Meeting be approved.

Vice Chairman Ryan Whitehouse: I would like to ask a question regarding the Cardinal Infrastructure Report. In the tax bill, something that I wasn't aware of, is the write-off for the subsidized parking benefits for a corporation. Did they ever mention the reason they provide that to their employees?

General Manager Isaac Thorne: APTA's main focus to Congress was to prevent the elimination of the commuter tax benefit.

Vice Chairman Ryan Whitehouse: I would encourage you to reach out to our corporate partners in the community and have an honest conversation to keep them on-board with that partnership. I don't know if that is the main reason IAA family of companies shows that option. It is 300 rides a month for us. So, this was just something that I was not aware of in the tax bill.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried that the *Consent Agenda* of the November 28, 2017 Board Meeting be approved.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Recommendation of *Connect Transit Sexual Harassment Policy*

General Manager Isaac Thorne stated that the Illinois General Assembly enacted *Public Act 100-0554* pertaining to sexual harassment. The Connect Transit staff took the opportunity to rewrite its entire *Sexual Harassment Policy* to include the addition of the new requirements.

General Manager Isaac Thorne asked that the Board approve the Recommendation of the *Connect Transit Sexual Harassment Policy*, as completely re-stated in its entirety, and further stated that he would take any questions that the Board may have.

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, seconded by Trustee Monica Bullington that the *Connect Transit Sexual Harassment Policy*, as completely re-stated in its entirety, be approved.

Trustee Judy Buchannan: Did legal counsel review the new Policy?

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Attorney Steve Mahrt has reviewed the new Policy twice.

Trustee Judy Buchannan: So he did make some suggestions?

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Yes, when we sent it to him he did make some suggestions. He wanted to add in the last bullet point the language: "constitutes a violation of a prohibition on sexual harassment in the context of knowing..." which is required under the State Statute. That is one recommendation he made. We added exactly what attorney Mahrt suggested.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried that the Recommendation of the *Connect Transit Sexual Harassment Policy*, as completely re-stated in its entirety (copy attached), be approved.

Recommendation of Connect Transit Sexual Harassment Policy Resolution

Trustee John Thomas moved to pass the Motion for the Board to adopt the *Connect Transit Sexual Harassment Resolution*, and the Motion was seconded by Trustee Judy Buchannan.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried that the Board of Trustees adopt the *Connect Transit Sexual Harassment Resolution* (copy attached).

Presentation by Farnsworth Group for Downtown Transfer Center Site Location Needs and Conceptual Design

General Manager, Isaac Thorne: I would now like to invite Aaron Quick and the Farnsworth Team to give their presentation on the Downtown Transfer Center. This will be for the program of spaces and conceptual design report for the Downtown Transfer Center.

Thank you, Isaac. My name is Aaron Quick and this is Chad Frankenberger and Jeff Gasteel of Farnsworth. As we are talking about in this report, it is basically what we were looking at, and something just as important, is what we were not looking at. It really started out as very basic for Connect Transit and your senior staff and the Board, to have the additional need of program spaces, the amount of space, what you need in a building of a transit center regarding buses, with an appropriate turning radius. We reviewed what the staff believes they need in a downtown off-street transit facility. It is not site specific. That was one thing we specifically stayed away from. This program of spaces focuses on what is needed for Connect Transit to function - in an effective off-street facility in an urban core, specifically; Bloomington.

We had several meetings with senior staff and interviewed and talked to them and they gave us certain things and then we took all the information and developed a program of spaces – how much square footage you need for each station, certain areas, and so on. Chad is going to go through that in a minute. We take that information and lay it out and added a narrative and you'll have that in your report. Jeff has put together several generic site layouts of what it would look like to function potentially – what it would take - how much square footage it would take – how many feet you need to have a transit center. It's not site specific, so when you start getting into specific sites, to some extent, at least you know what you are looking at. When you look at the layouts, and a couple options we

took upon ourselves: development, leverage, and transportation investment as it relates to economic development and how that would spur some economic development in mass transit. Many times you can leverage transportation dollars in investment to spur-on some economic development. So we are going to show you a couple prototypes of that. This is just the very first step. All this information you will have. Now you can know what you need when you start looking at size and scope. If you have ever looked at a feasibility study when you start from the very beginning and you analyze very carefully, this information will be helpful. This is not wasted information. This is a process. It's a step, a very small step to get started with. Now I'd like to have Chad to talk a little about the program and layout.

Chad Frankenberger: Thank you. We worked with the staff here to outline a comprehensive space. We are looking at four (4) different areas of the space and what that would include. The first space that we looked at was the public or the patron space which you are entitled to include. Three (3) of the main spaces that we looked at or that were identified contained lobbies. Obviously, you need a large lobby space or gathering area in the interior. You would have restrooms, both men's and women's, as well as a family restroom. Off of that space, a multi-purpose meeting space that would be assessable to the staff members. Within this kind of patron lobby, maybe some other kind of amenities, like PIDs for your riders, as well as things of that nature. As we move from the main public spaces, there are spaces that the program required. One of those private spaces is an adjacent customer service desk or an area for the patrons to come for information. For the customer service area we provided a space for up to three (3) work stations for an open office area. This open area could phase transients from here to there. From that open area you would have access to private restrooms the staff could use, as well as your bus drivers for carry-ons. We would have some locker spaces to place personal belongings, as well as other spaces that were identified as we went through this workshop. In addition, those public and private spaces would need storage for day-to-day materials and with this large meeting space that would be assessable to both areas, having some area for storing conference tables and chairs. The idea of that meeting space was to be able to do some training – potentially - or have some conference area that is multi-faceted. This area would be a closed-in space to be able to use it for a variety of uses. Additionally, every building will need service, mechanical/electrical room, janitor's closet and things of that nature, and a space to house circuits, server and IT equipment. The last item we looked at were site features and amenities. For nice days some outdoor waiting areas could be placed here for the patrons, as well as an area for a bike rack, patron drop-off and pick-up, square footage for the buses, and then the bus space itself. With all that being said, for fitting those spaces as well as providing venting for circulation,

we came up with roughly 7,400 square foot, encompassing all those programs. So from that (keeping in mind, the 7,400 square feet) how do we fit that into a natural building layout, keeping that very “high level” and “conceptual”, we came up with a couple of footprints, that we can then apply to the site layouts that Jeff prepared.

Chairman Mike McCurdy: NSF and GSF, which is net square footage and gross square footage?

Farnsworth Group Member Jeff Gastel: Correct. Some of the program requirements that influenced the layout were to provide a hub for ten (10) buses and one of the rules of the space is that there would be no backing up movements for any of the buses, and to minimize where the buses load and unload, so the requirements of the program really lend itself well to a soft going around the layout for the bus stations here. The turning movements coming in and going East (on the right-hand side), coupled with the building, meets the program requirements that were specified. The blue area is a covered canopy over the lots for folks to get from bus to bus from out of the building without getting wet. Radiuses for the buses are the bare minimum. This is the smallest space that we could fit all ten (10) buses on the site.

Farnsworth Group Member Aaron Quick: 500 feet long, 250 feet wide?

Farnsworth Group Member Jeff Gasteel: Correct. It varies in downtown, but they can be as much as 250' x 450' or 200' x 325'. You could even go a block and a half to make a right-of-way. One of the requirements on this layout which would be a reality in the feasibility study is the required water retention would have to be met. The costs of effective storm water retention are always above ground, and of course, that may increase some of the space needs for the program. Once we have the layout and the amount of debt, we can build some space needs around it. You may be asking what the hub would look like if we were to do some development for the buses to accompany. We have introduced in this layout another way for the buses to come in on the upper left and then drive past the buses that are loading to get around them to get out. If you go a little bit further to the right and do not have to interact with the buses that may be trying to get on works pretty well and give you another choice. It promotes safety and provides drivers another way to go without having to interact with all the buses that are parked. I want to point out that with this layout, the parking on the left side is completely separate of the bus pavement area. Anyone parking in the parking lot to use the services of the building is not walking on the pavement where the buses are. That was also another important aspect of the program. You can see how the program space in red-dash could incorporate some space as well in the facility.

Farnsworth Group Member Aaron Quick: Again, it shows that leveraging that dollars' worth of development potential. Speaking of transportation, we have a perfect example of that in uptown Normal. That is exactly what was done there. It could happen in downtown Bloomington.

Vice-Chairman Ryan Whitehouse: So, you said that this is "bare bones".

Farnsworth Group Member Aaron Quick: I don't think I would describe it as "bare bones". I think after meeting with the staff, this is really what they think they need.

Vice-Chairman Ryan Whitehouse: Is this the minimal amount of space that we need for this?

Farnsworth Group Member Aaron Quick: For your program, this is the minimal space we would need, that 500' x 250' or so.

Vice-Chairman Ryan Whitehouse: Is it important to think about – and I don't know this answer at all - is it important to think about future growth, future expansion do you think? I know that right now, this meets our needs, but when you go into this big of a project, are we planning for future growth?

Farnsworth Group Member Aaron Quick: Future expansion is included in this. That's why it is ten (10) buses.

Vice-Chairman Ryan Whitehouse: So my understanding is that this is drawn up for us to get what we're hoping for but understanding that with a partnership, some things might need to be negotiated or have a smaller space, we might have to do some backing up?

General Manager Isaac Thorne: We would have to find a way to work around that. We do not want our bus operators to back-up the bus because there is a chance that we do not see pedestrians that could be directly behind the bus, or they don't see the pedestrian in the mirrors, and we don't ever want to see that happen.

Trustee John Thomas: This need for ten (10) spots is also dependent upon the idea that we are going to do the pulse....

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Right now we already have six (6) buses in downtown Bloomington all at once. We would like to fit eight (8). We cannot because there is not enough space.

Trustee John Thomas: Before we went to this system, however, we had the required system which would use the allotted space.

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Correct.

Trustee John Thomas: Do you envision there being any changes to that system? Because if we expand, the pulse system is not the optimum system.

General Manager Isaac Thorne: What we are trying to do with the pulse system is to make sure that all the buses meet at one single time to make it very easy for the customer. If you are going to switch that out, you have to have even more frequency because you cannot have a customer waiting thirty (30) minutes for the next bus. They are not going to do that – they are going to take that car if they have a choice. So, you have to either increase your operating expense by adding more frequency to bus routes requiring less buses at this location by doing what you are saying – or you keep the same frequency and you may be able to add some frequency, but all the buses pulse.

Trustee John Thomas: You mean re-route? They are twice an hour currently? If we got to quarter hour on every route....

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Right now we have the buses coming in typically at every thirty (30) minutes during peak service. However, the GREEN route is fifteen (15) minute service all day. Right now we are working on a thirty (30) minute pulse.

Chairman Mike McCurdy: If we move into more expenses, it would mean moving into more capital expenses if we were to do something other than the current pulse system.

Vice-Chairman Ryan Whitehouse: Now that we have the study presented to us, what is the next step?

General Manager Isaac Thorne: I am reaching out to Steve Rasmussen to try to set up a time for the presentation with Farnsworth Group to give to the City of Bloomington Council. This would give us an opportunity to talk about our needs and discuss what the City of Bloomington's needs are and see if we can work together and move this forward. Until those conversations happen, there is no sense in moving forward with a feasibility study.

Town of Normal Manager Mark Petersen: I don't suppose – as we are talking – you have any cost estimates at this stage of the game – it's so preliminary.

Farnsworth Group Member Aaron Quick: No, it is preliminary. What we have done so far though, is a big step.

Trustee Discussion on Downtown Transfer Center

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Our next step is to work with Steve Rasmussen, to set up a presentation for the City of Bloomington Council where the Farnsworth Group would give that, and working with them to express what our needs are and also working with them to see what their needs are and how we can form a partnership in moving forward with this project. We are not performing a feasibility study and we will not move forward with this project until that happens and we have those discussions.

Town of Normal Manager Mark Peterson: Was the City staff involved in this process or did they provide any input?

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Yes, I met with Austin Grammar, to talk about sites that the City of Bloomington owns. They actually narrowed it down to at least eight (8) different potential sites.

Town of Normal Manager Mark Peterson: My sense is just from conversations, the City staff, as well as the City Council see that the structure is in significant need. I don't think there is any question that the current transfer infrastructure is completely inadequate. I just didn't know how much staff had been involved in these discussions. We should bring those folks up to speed before talking with the Council.

Trustee Jennifer McDade: I just have a quick question. I'm going to take what feels like a big step back and in order to get an answer to this - in the last couple of years, I think it's worth asking. In order for this to make any sense, I think I have to ask us to suspend the understanding of where things currently stand and are currently situated. I understand that we have two (2) communities that are right next to each other and I understand that we have live bus service to uptown Normal and downtown Bloomington. I understand that we have a transfer center in uptown Normal and now we feel like we need one in downtown Bloomington. I guess what I need to understand is that when I go into a community that doesn't have two (2) community centers, and it has only one (1), are we building two (2) transfer centers because we have two (2) communities side by side or are we building transfer centers because that is the best practice for the square miles of this system? I'll just pause there and if I need to clarify further, I will.

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Downtown Bloomington has been a transfer point for over thirty (30) years. Before the COA (Comprehensive Operational Analysis), we used four (4) transfer locations. Those were (i) Uptown Station (actually before Uptown Station, it was on North Street near Waterson Towers); (ii) Eastland Mall; (iii) College Hills Mall; and (iv) Downtown Bloomington. Nelson Nygaard completed a Rider's Survey and an Origin Destination Study to determine where people are coming from and where they are going. Downtown Bloomington is a location where a lot of people are riding the bus from Downtown Bloomington to Uptown Bloomington and also out to Heartland Community

College. The Downtown Bloomington station is where a lot of people are originating and that is why they shrunk the transfer station locations from Eastland and College Hills to only Uptown and Downtown. Those are the two (2) main hubs of where the buses come to and pulse at.

Trustee John Thomas: It is a rider origination decision. It doesn't have to do with fairness or balance or any of those other things.

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Correct.

Trustee Jennifer McDade: Could you conceptually run a system of this size with one (1) transfer point?

General Manager Isaac Thorne: It would be very inconvenient for our riders.

Trustee Jennifer McDade: Even if it was located in a different spot than either of the transfer centers are today?

General Manager Isaac Thorne: For any transfer location, you look at the origin and destination data first. Let's say we move it out to Eastland Mall – how many people take a trip from Eastland Mall - very few because very few people live in the Eastland Mall area. A lot of people may be going there maybe, but they are not actually originating there. Whereas, in downtown Bloomington, there is a large population that needs transit. That was something else we also looked at in the COA. Specifically, where is the "transit need" in the Bloomington-Normal area?

Chairman Mike McCurdy: On Jennifer's question about whether or not a community can have one (1) transfer center – you said it would be inconvenient. What are the reasons or ways it would be inconvenient for customers?

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Right now we have eight (8) buses going into downtown Bloomington. How many buses can we move out of downtown Bloomington? We could probably move three (3) of those outside of downtown Bloomington, but then we are going to duplicate service to uptown to make that transfer. So we're going to have a lot of buses traveling up and down Main and Center Street that are eventually going to go down Lincoln Street or Oakland Street, to get to State Farm and Kroger, so there's going to be a lot of duplication of service that is just not needed because you are eliminating that transfer location at downtown Bloomington. You are still going to need that service but you are not allowing the transfer because you are forcing the transfer at Uptown Station instead of downtown.

Trustee John Thomas: You could get away with having one (1) transfer center if it was 1972, because Normal was only 20,000 with most of them in business located in downtown Bloomington. There is a “built-in” destination right there. You could have done it then but as Normal has grown, we now have more urban business and an entertainment center in uptown (which wasn’t there in Normal in the ‘70’s) so now it’s much more difficult to do. In addition, we also have State Farm.

General Manager Isaac Thorne: Main and Center Street is our transit corridor. The AQUA route has 30 minute service, the GREEN route has 15 minute service, and the YELLOW route has 15 minute service between Uptown Station and Heartland Community College. Main Street is where most of our buses are running. We would like to use Veteran’s, but it is just not safe for our passengers to get on and off on Veteran’s.

Trustee Jennifer McDade: I think we need to do a better job educating. I’ve learned a lot since we participated in the Work Session last week and I learned a lot about the community and various perspectives. I don’t think that there is “buy-in” in a number of parts of the community. Regardless of the City Council or this Board or anyone else here, especially if you are at the City Council, you are basing your support for a project like this on public support. I don’t know that the general public has an understanding of the need for an additional transfer center to be able to show support to the Council. We may think that we are further along or wish we were at this point. That is just my observation. I think that we can continue to forge ahead and I agree we should meet with staff but I think also someone is going to have to talk about the federal and state money and really engage the public and help them understand the need for this because that is where the buy-in is going to come from. First there is going to have to be an education piece with the public. Again, I get that we have been in this conversation for a long time and it all makes perfect sense, but I just don’t know the public is there.

Trustee Judy Buchanan: I think what you are talking about is that we have to be realistic and I don’t think anyone at this table or our staff or people here in the audience would think that this is a “slam-dunk”. The citizens and the constituents of this type of project it is an important part when you talk with the Council. They are going to have to feel really good about the fact of whether or not their constituents are in support of this. I think we are in the very preliminary stages. Timing is important. This is an opportunity that I suspect in moving forward with this, I personally was surprised and recognize the fact that when John talks about 1972, many people are just now realizing that we have a bus system that has been around for a long time. So there is a great deal of education to be done. I just think we are in our infancy on this one.

Vice-Chairman Ryan Whitehouse: I would say, clearly, that a Downtown Transfer Station is needed. Those buses – just these last weeks, we talk about all the time on this Board about providing shelter to our customers and Isaac and his team did a phenomenal job of putting a heated bus out there these last two (2) weeks because of how miserably cold it was. It's clear and I agree with you 100% that there has to be education. I do think this story can get support with partnerships. I agree with you but if the question is "Do we need a Downtown Transfer Station," yes, I believe we do need a Downtown Transfer Station. That's my opinion on that issue.

Trustee John Bowman: I've seen this statistic in a couple of uses and correct me if I am wrong, but about 5% of the population use public transit for their daily commute so that's 95% not even stepping on the bus. So to your point about it being an uphill climb, that's true of just running a system because people don't use it. They are paying for it, but they don't use it. So are they going to want to pony-up money for new amenities? Maybe if it's not going to come out of their pocket, when you talk about federal monies, are you getting back some of that cash they are yanking out of Washington, and contribute to the economic development for this town? I think that's always been true. There is just not much of a populous that has direct connection with the system.

Trustee Jennifer McDade: What I think that we have to realize is that the Council Members are getting calls every day about the garbage and about the transit, the library, the police department or whatever. They are not necessarily to your point. They are not getting calls about transit helping people. I think that we could benefit from this conversation with the community and help them understand. This isn't about whether I have an opinion or not about the Downtown Transit Center. I need to understand for the community that it is grounded in best practices and if the data supports having one, that it is operationally sound for that. We need to be talking about it. I think the other night there were times where it was a little bit looser – "I think this is a really good idea"; "I think this catalyst project is great"; "I think this is a really bad idea"; and I think it really isn't great. Think about when we have to spend time in that space, we have to also be ready to back it up with data and evidence – an argument that makes sense.

Town of Normal Manager Mark Petersen: Just a reminder, I think it was two (2) years ago, with the aid of the system, we partnered with the County and the City of Bloomington and put forth a TIGER Grant Application for a transfer station. That is an arduous process and a lot of work went into that Application. I know that the transit staff as well as the accounting staff, that we had support virtually from every major employer in the community, every institution, and the Town of Normal. They all supported it. Although, I'm not sure if you are the average citizen and you knock on their door and say

“What do you think of a downtown transit station?” I’m not sure they get it. They probably don’t. You are absolutely right that they are disengaged about transit needs. I do think there is widespread acknowledgment and support for the need for some downtown transport. Unfortunately, that didn’t work out and we didn’t get the Grant even though I thought it was a great Application and a great partnership with the County and Connect. I do think it helped lay the ground work not only in terms of community support but also the evidence it provided in that Application to demonstrate the need. In the Application a lot of people were involved and we spent a lot of money putting that together and it didn’t work. Jennifer’s right that we need to once again go out in the community and get broad community support. I’m pretty convinced that you will be able to get that and I am also convinced that the Council and the Board understand that it is a critical need. How it’s done and where it’s done are the details we need to work through. They need to be at the table and they need to be 100% in support and I think we’ll get there.

Chairman Mike McCurdy: Mark used the word “groundwork”, and you used the word “backed-up”. I think the use of comprehensive plans and a continuing discussion about a transfer center in downtown Bloomington is also in the City’s comprehensive short-term priority to address the Front Street issue. I don’t think it says “build a transit center”, but it says to “fix” that problem. It’s a short term priority for the City and it’s in our own strategic plan that this Board helped develop last summer and adopted unanimously to be operational. Finally, Nelson Nygaard, who did the research and a lot of the legwork on our COA report, said we need to pull back. They didn’t say “oh, you need to lose a transfer center, you’re too fat downtown.” They did say we need to improve in a couple areas and focus on Walmart and the other two (2) should continue to maintain the system.

Trustee Judy Buchanan: Just the amount of information in that COA I think would be very helpful as we present it to the Council. We’ve done some due diligence.

Trustee Mike McCurdy: You are right about the information in the COA. There needs to be a better job about the education. There is never enough education in my opinion.

Trustee Jennifer McDade: I agree with all the comments that have been made over the last couple of years and so forth. I also would point out that there was a meeting last week where there was not support. The people that were in the room were not in support and the people that were not in the room were not in support. Now you can argue that the transit project is controversial because the Library is controversial or because downtown is controversial and all of those things would be true and so to assume that we have overwhelming support for this is a blind spot.

Chairman Mike McCurdy: I didn't assume that we had overwhelming support. I assumed that the meeting was necessary to the project of Connect as an education tool to inform the people at the table about some of the "ins and outs" of the downtown catalyst project needs and the Library's needs in both locations. That was really the objective of that meeting.

Vice-Chairman Ryan Whitehouse: We could discuss last Tuesday's meeting a lot. I think there were points from different people that we need to remember here. I agree with Jennifer on some of her points that there wasn't a complete buy-in. There were a lot of variables in that discussion. I think Connect Transit needs to have a discussion on its own merits on its own project and talk about how we can partner with the City of Bloomington in the downtown area to meet their comprehensive plan and to meet our needs with a strategic plan. How we can partner with them to make that happen. I think that is the discussion that needs to happen and it needs to be based on what Bloomington and Connect Transit can do to make this project happen. I won't discredit anything you said because there was not complete agreement in that room and I don't think anyone thinks that here either. We need to stand on our own feet about the downtown station.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Strategic Plan Update

The strategic plan proposes system alignment with the performance toward transit objectives. Staff will be working with MCRPC on the the scope of work that was presented to the Board at the last meeting. Sue and her team have looked that over. We are going to have to get outside consultant help in completing the short-range transit plan. Sue has told me 12-18 months before the short-range transit plan completed. It is not going to be something that we get done by June of this year. One of our other things we are doing as part of this short-range transportation plan is performing a Rider and Customer Satisfaction Survey which is also another one of our goals for this year. We want to get a baseline for customer satisfaction.

Staff is working internally with the data we are being provided with from GenFare and is looking at a fare restructure in the next six to eight (6-8) months. As the Board knows, we have not increased our one-way fares in the last ten (10) years.

We are still updating our staff-recommended monthly performance measures report that monitors and valuates the system performance to the Board in August 2017. Just this month we added the marketing pieces to view our impact on Twitter and Facebook. We

are working to build our audience on social media. Soon we are going to create customer testimonials and videos. Staff is also working on providing a “frequently asked questions” (FAQ) page on the website. I think it is also something we can look at for a downtown transit center. This would help the public in understanding what we are trying to accomplish and why.

In our meetings with McLean County Regions Planning and also in our Connect Transit Advisor meetings, the staff and I have talked about how the value of transit accessibility over the last five (5) months has worked on improving bus stops infrastructure. I will be bringing a list to the Board recommending a 5-year bus stop improvement plan next month, after obtaining CTAC’s approval.

Fiscal Year 2019 Budget

Next month the staff will present a draft budget to the Board. This will give the Board an opportunity to ask questions. We are going to also take a look at extending night service for Monday-Saturday. Right now most of our service ends at 9:00 pm and we want to see if we are able to extend that service to 10:30 or 11:00 pm. However, we do not want to increase costs so we want to look at other areas where we might be able to decrease service but add more service at night. The community is requesting later service. We are going to give them options to choose. If you want to see increased service at night – Monday-Saturday – these are your options to reduce service elsewhere.

Advertising Revenue

Trustee Judy Buchannan asked last month about the decrease in advertising revenue. Staff has been exploring the possibilities of contracting with the advertising firm to wrap 5-10 buses. Right now we are having a very hard time attracting local businesses to buy full wraps because they are expensive. What we will have to do is contract through National Advertisers to see if we could wrap five (5) or ten (10) buses which could bring in \$50,000-\$100,000 of additional revenue.

TRUSTEE’S COMMENTS

Chairman Mike McCurdy: I just wanted to thank the Trustees for the time they gave to the meeting last week. I know Jennifer had to rearrange her schedule to be there and I appreciate that. I know you all value your time. Isaac, we washed over it earlier, I didn’t

bring it up but can you quickly talk about ridership? We are now half way through the fiscal year.

General Manager Isaac Thorne: November ridership increased by 17.6%. We had a decrease in December ridership of 5%. Our national peer agency ridership has decreased 3.25% in the last five (5) months, that's July-November, and our regional transit agency peers has decreased 5% in that same period of time. I don't have the numbers for December for peers in the regional transit agencies. We also are still seeing a large ridership increase for Sunday service, so that is very encouraging.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Jennifer McDade, Seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan to adjourn.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 5:54 p.m.