

**CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
WORK SESSION PROCEEDINGS OF FEBRUARY 23, 2016**

The Work Session of the Board of Trustees of Connect Transit was held at the Connect Transit Board Room #135, 351 Wylie Drive, Normal, Illinois 61761 on February 23, 2016 at 3:30 p.m.

TRUSTEES PRESENT: Bill Wilson, Chairman
 Mike McCurdy, Vice-Chairman
 Ryan Whitehouse, Secretary
 Jennifer McDade
 John Bowman
 John Thomas

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Judy Buchanan

CITY MANAGERS: Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
 Isaac Thorne, Chief Operating Officer
 Julie Beer, Executive Assistant

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 3:32 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager addressed the Board. He stated that this Work Session was being held to discuss the Comprehensive Operational Analysis, (COA). The time to make some final decisions is drawing near. There were some ancillary issues to consider related to achieving our goals of making this a simpler, easier and inviting transit system for our current customers as well as our future customers. Mr. Johnson requested that Isaac Thorne, Chief Operating Officer, (COO) present the Board with the status of the COA to date.

Mr. Thorne addressed the Board. He stated that COA listening sessions began in October of 2015. Feedback from the community was received. Additional listening sessions have been scheduled for March, one at the United Way office and one at the Town of Normal Public Library. Looking ahead, Nelson/Nygaard would be presenting their final report to the Board on either March 28, 2016 or March 29, 2016.

The Board determined that Tuesday, March 29th at 4:30 is the best date to hear the final report on the COA from Nelson/Nygaard.

Mr. Thorne noted that all data regarding Connect Transit's existing routes, feedback received from the listening sessions and the proposed route restructure will be included in the final report.

Mr. Thorne stated that in addition to the update regarding the COA, he hoped that the Board would provide feedback on fare media options. Potential options to consider would be thirty (30) day, seven (7) day, and one (1) day passes, etc. Connect Transit staff hoped to keep the customers options simple.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned if there would be a price discount over a three (3) day pass as opposed to a one (1) day pass. Mr. Thorne responded that prices have not been calculated yet, but the multi date passes would be more of a convenience pass than a discounted pass.

Trustee John Thomas noted that the fares are already low at \$1.00.

Mr. Thorne stated that the preference is that customers buy passes as opposed to putting cash in the farebox. In addition to increasing the thirty (30) day passes, there is the potential to add Sunday service.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned if the passes could be loaded with dollar amounts. Mr. Thorne responded that there would be that ability, however, only at Connect Transit's office. The infrastructure for off-site machines to load the passes was cost prohibitive.

Trustee Judy Buchanan arrived at 3:45 p.m.

The Board determined that staff should research the cost, benefit and discount prices for selling one (1), seven (7) and thirty (30) day passes and return to the Board for consideration. Mr. Thorne affirmed.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that as Connect Transit reaches the homestretch on the COA, he questioned if the Board believed that staff was doing its best to keep them informed about its progress.

Trustee John Bowman noted that it was difficult to locate the COA's website. Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager noted that the link is on the front page of Connect Transit's website.

Trustee Bowman questioned if the most updated version of the COA was on the website. Isaac Thorne, COO stated that Nelson/Nygaard is currently working on putting the most current updates on the site.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated that the Board would need to be prepared to answer questions from the public regarding the proposed route restructure. Mr. Johnson agreed, noting that staff had received really good feedback from citizens at the public listening sessions. There are many customers who are very excited about the proposed route restructure. Staff will be encouraging these individuals to be the champions of the proposed route restructure and to be out front and center to tell their stories. He also noted that those citizens who are against the proposed route restructure would be the loudest.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy reiterated that there would be additional listening sessions in March.

Trustee Judy Buchanan questioned if a Question and Answer document had been created. Mr. Johnson stated that one had not, however it was a good idea. He was surprised that there were less citizens opposed to the proposed route restructure than he thought there would be.

Town of Normal Manager, Mark Peterson stated that it was important to be able to demonstrate the number of users impacted and the need to put Connect Transit's resources where they can benefit the most people. There may be some inconveniences for some but the changes are for the benefit of many.

Trustee John Thomas stated that the increase in ridership and the increased convenience should be emphasized.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager agreed. All of the information would be put together in a "Frequently Asked Questions or Question and Answer" type format in plain terms.

Mr. Johnson noted that public hearings would be held regarding any route restructure and service level changes after the Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington both pass their respective budgets.

Isaac Thorne, COO, informed the Board that the Nelson/Nygaard final report would be provided to them prior to the March 29, 2016 presentation.

Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager stated that if the Town of Normal and the City of Bloomington both approve earmarking a portion of the increased sales tax revenue to Connect Transit, Connect Transit's staff and Board would need to be able to articulate where the additional funding will be used.

Mr. Johnson thanked the Board for the feedback. He has some clear directives, adjustments and expansions that he will be pursuing right away. Connect Transit will continue to advance the transparency of the COA and proposed route restructure process. Connect Transit wants to position the community for greater mobility.

Mark Peterson, Town of Normal Manager inquired about the frequency of system review for a system of Connect Transit's size. Mr. Johnson responded that a system of Connect Transit's size should review its route structure and efficiencies at least once every decade.

Mr. Johnson noted that improved metrics have been put in place to assist with the management of the system and explain its raw data.

Chairman Bill Wilson stated that if there were no other questions or discussion, he requested a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, Seconded by Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy to adjourn.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Time: 4:26 p.m.

Ryan Whitehouse, Secretary