

**CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
PROCEEDINGS OF OCTOBER 17, 2016**

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 October 17, 2016 at 3:30 p.m.

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

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Judy Buchanan

CITY MANAGERS: Steve Rasmussen, City of Bloomington Assistant City Manager

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
 Isaac Thorne, Chief Operating Officer
 Julie Beer, Executive Assistant
 Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager
 Martin Glaze, Operations Manager

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 3:35 p.m. Roll call was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Beth Triem addressed the Board. She stated she works at Bergners at Eastland Mall. The new route structure eliminated later service to Eastland Mall. She is unable to work later shifts, and must leave work by 7 p.m. in order to have bus transportation home.

Trustee Judy Buchanan and Town of Normal Manager Mark Peterson arrived at 3:36 p.m.

Joan Crooks addressed the Board. She lives on west Hovey. She requests that the Lime route be restored to its old route. She stated many riders in the areas that old route served are no longer able to use the system.

Rick Barks addressed the Board. He is the Asset Protection Manager at Walmart in Normal, Bloomington and Clinton. He stated Connect Transit's patrons are also Walmart's patrons. He believed that the Normal Walmart was one of the top five (5) stops for Connect Transit. He believed that the new stop at Walmart in Normal is dangerous. The stop is at the street. There is no shelter. He requested that the Board reconsider the new stop and return to dropping patrons off at the front door. He stated Walmart would be willing to work with Connect Transit for a solution. He stated Walmart did not have any prior communication with Connect Transit regarding removing the stop out of Walmart's parking lot.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting of September 27, 2016 and Executive Session Minutes of August 23, 2016

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy stated the Consent Agenda would normally include financial and statistical data reports, but due to the rescheduling of the regular October Board meeting date, there were no reports to include with this meeting. The reports for September would be included in the next Board meeting packet.

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, Seconded by Trustee Jennifer McDade that the Consent Agenda be approved.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution Urging Illinois State Leaders to Release Downstate Operating Assistance Grants

Andrew Johnson, General Manager, introduced this item. He noted that the State of Illinois has not been paying its bills, and currently owes Connect Transit roughly \$5 million dollars. Without these funds, Connect Transit will be unable to continue providing service. This Resolution urges the State of Illinois to release funds to be paid to Connect Transit and other transit systems that are due payment. Staff recommends that the Board adopt the Resolution.

RESOLUTION URGING ILLINOIS STATE LEADERS TO RELEASE DOWNSTATE OPERATING ASSISTANCE GRANT FUNDS

Whereas, the State of Illinois has been operating without a State budget since July 1, 2015; and

Whereas, the provision of public transportation service is essential to the people of Illinois; and

Whereas, the Downstate Public Transportation Act (30 ILCS 740/2-1 et seq.) ("Act") authorizes the State of Illinois, acting by and through the Illinois Department of Transportation, to provide grants and make funds available to assist in the development and operation of public transportation systems; and

Whereas, Connect Transit relies on consistent funding from the State of Illinois as it represents 65% of Connect Transit's current operating budget; and

Whereas, without these funds, Connect Transit will be forced to suspend service causing many in the Bloomington/Normal community to be unable to access healthcare, education, jobs, and retail.

Whereas, the State of Illinois has not made a payment to Connect Transit in Fiscal Year 2017. This equates to approximately \$5 million dollars that Connect Transit applies toward items such as fuel, salaries, healthcare, facilities management, and maintenance expenses; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CONNECT TRANSIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES that we call upon the Governor and General Assembly to take action to immediately release all Downstate Operating Assistance Funds owed to Downstate public transportation providers, which includes Connect Transit.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution is forwarded to the Governor, Senate President, Senate Minority Leader, House Speaker, House Minority Leader, as well as the State Senators and Representatives serving the City of Bloomington and Town of Normal.

Passed this 17th Day of October, 2016

APPROVED this 17th Day of October, 2016

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy

ATTEST:

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse

Motion by Trustee Judy Buchanan, Seconded by Trustee John Bowman that the Resolution be adopted.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated Connect Transit staff has been evaluating the new route structure since it has been in place. There are some areas that have the potential for modifications. A Power Point presentation had been prepared and he requested that Martin

Glaze, Operations Manager, and Isaac Thorne, Chief Operating Officer (COO) provide the Board with an overview of these potential modifications.

Isaac Thorne, COO, addressed the Board. He provided the Board with an overview of the pros and cons of the potential modifications. He stated most of the potential changes involve the Purple, Teal and Orange Routes.

Town of Normal Manager Mark Peterson stated it was a good time to review and consider potential modifications to the routes.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned the next steps. Isaac Thorne, COO responded that the proposed modifications would be discussed with riders, drivers, etc. Vice Chairman McCurdy questioned if public hearings would be required to implement any modifications. Mr. Thorne responded that public hearings would not be required.

Trustee John Bowman questioned if additional proposals would be considered. Mr. Thorne responded that Connect Transit staff would be meeting with individuals to discuss the proposed modifications and would return to the Board at a later time with a recommendation.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager provided the Board with an update on the lack of funding by the State of Illinois to the Downstate Operating Assistance Program (DOAP). The State of Illinois has not made the payments to the fund and at the present time, has no plans to make any payments from the General Revenue Fund to the DOAP fund. As such, Connect Transit has not received its payment. October and November are very bad revenue collection months.

Mr. Johnson stated he has had personal contact with the State of Illinois Comptroller's office to advise them that receiving payment is very critical to Connect Transit. In the absence of payment, Connect Transit staff continues to evaluate how long the system can operate before it becomes necessary to suspend service. The goal is to not have to suspend service at all. He believes that the State will make a payment, however, even if payment is made by December, that payment will keep Connect Transit operating for only a few more months. There will continue to be a problem until the State commits to making its payments to the DOAP fund on time.

Mr. Johnson reminded the Board that there would be a Town Hall meeting on October 27, 2016 from 6 to 8 p.m. to allow legislators to hear from Connect Transit's customers regarding this issue.

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse stated he has little faith in the State. He questioned if plans were being put in place laying out to the public and lawmakers the process of a Connect Transit shutdown, i.e., what will go first, second, third, etc.

Mr. Johnson responded that a plan must be in place and a date certain for shutdown and employee layoff, and what the process will be after that. Staff hopes to not get to that point.

Vice Chairman Mike McCurdy questioned a way to scale back service as opposed to a complete system shut down. Mr. Johnson responded that 2/3 of Connect Transit's budget comes from the State of Illinois. There is really no way to scale back.

Trustee Jennifer McDade stated it would be beneficial to capture rider responses to the potential shut down. She questioned what could be done to assist riders with contacting legislators regarding what a shutdown would mean to them. Melissa Chrisman, Marketing and Business Development Manager stated a paper card has been created that includes contact information for area legislators as well as information created that will be shared on social media.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated he would continue to keep the Board updated regarding this issue.

Mr. Johnson informed the Board that despite the funding issue, Connect Transit had held the first of several public education sessions to assist riders with the new route system and trip planning. Additional sessions are scheduled for Oct. 19, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the United Way office, on Oct. 24, from 9 to 11 a.m. at the Connect Transit office and on Oct. 26, from 4 to 6 p.m. at Uptown Station Multi-purpose Room. He invited the Board to attend any of the meetings.

TRUSTEE'S COMMENTS

Secretary Ryan Whitehouse requested that Connect Transit staff follow up with Walmart regarding their safety concerns for their customers using Connect Transit.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Trustee John Thomas, Seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan to adjourn to Executive Session.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Time: 4:22 p.m.

Motion by Trustee John Thomas, seconded by Trustee Judy Buchanan to return to Regular Session and adjourn.

Time: 5:04 p.m.

AYE: All

NAY: None

Motion carried.

Julie Beer, Executive Assistant