

CONNECT TRANSIT  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
PROCEEDINGS OF RESCHEDULED DECEMBER, 2013 REGULAR MEETING OF  
JANUARY 7, 2014

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 at 4:30 p.m.

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

TRUSTEES ABSENT: John Bowman  
Ryan Whitehouse

CITY MANAGERS:

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  
Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director  
Julie Phillips, Labor Relations Executive Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 4:31 p.m. Roll call was taken.

**The following was presented:**

Chairperson Judy Buchanan opened the meeting by stating that there would be a change to the existing agenda procedure regarding approving the Board meeting proceedings. The intent of this change was to reduce the amount of documents in the Board packets each month. Approval of the Board proceedings will appear on the Consent agenda with the Board having reviewed and corrected as necessary prior to the meeting. Secretary Mike McCurdy questioned if the proceedings would be provided to the Board in advance for review. Andrew Johnson, General Manager confirmed, stating that the proceedings would be provided to the Board ten to twenty (10-20) days prior to the next meeting.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if any Board members were opposed to this change in procedure. There were none opposed.

There were several questions regarding disbursement items appearing on the report of Disbursements for Month of December, 2013.

Vice Chairman Bill Wilson requested clarification on the payment to Ecolane USA, Inc. in the amount of \$17,625 for a License Agreement. Andrew Johnson, General Manager responded that it was scheduling software and a text messaging system.

Secretary Mike McCurdy questioned the payment to Oberlander Alarm Systems, Inc. in the amount of \$191 for a Security Alarm Service Fee. Mr. Johnson responded that the facility's alarm system had been set off by accident on a couple of occasions. Both occasions were weather related when wind caused the alarm to sound. Repairs to the area have been completed and the issue resolved.

Secretary McCurdy questioned the payment to Stark Excavating, Inc. in the amount of \$2,200 for concrete. He inquired if it was payment for a shelter pad. Mr. Johnson confirmed.

Trustee John Thomas questioned the payment to Comcast Spotlight in the amount of \$5,400 for Commercial Advertising.

Trustee Bowman arrived at 4:36 p.m.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager advised that the fee was for commercial advertising on cable channels. Trustee Thomas questioned the number of versions of commercials that were airing. Mr. Johnson responded that there were four (4) different versions, and that the commercials would be freshened in the near future.

Trustee John Thomas questioned the payment to Visa in the amount of \$4,591.85 for Travel & Meetings. Mr. Johnson responded that the payment was for attendance at the American Public Transit Association annual conference. Staff was staying within the travel and conference budget. It was normal for three to four (3-4) staff members to attend.

Chairperson Buchanan questioned if there were any other questions or concerns regarding items appearing on the Consent Agenda. There being none, she requested a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion by Secretary McCurdy, seconded by Vice Chairman Bill Wilson that the Consent Agenda be approved.

Ayes: Chairman Judy Buchanan, Vice-Chairman Bill Wilson, Secretary Mike McCurdy, Trustees John Bowman, Felicia Shaw and John Thomas.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

Chairperson Judy Buchanan stated that there was no Old Business to discuss.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that there were three (3) items under New Business and all three (3) items involved procurements. The first item was the Award of Website Design Services RFP 13-07. There were a series of weighted evaluations by a team of staff members. There were nine (9) responses. It was a robust process. Connect Transit had previously experienced the process of requesting proposals for website design without much success. For this request, staff revised the scope of work in order to procure the best website possible for Connect Transit. This second Request for Proposals (RFP) process garnered a better response, with both national and local respondents. After evaluating the responses, staff chose Civica Software as the firm provided the best design and content management options. Mr. Johnson stated that Steve Stockton, Information Technology (IT) Manager was available to answer questions regarding the company selected.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if staff had spoken with any other Civica Software's clients about their experiences. Steve Stockton, IT Manager responded that staff had not spoken with any of their existing clients; however, staff had evaluated other websites that were designed by them.

Trustee John Bowman questioned cost comparisons. Mr. Stockton responded that the prices ranged from \$23,000 to \$130,000. The cost differences involved content managing software and support. In some cases, multiple vendors were needed for support. Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that one response was from a firm from New York whose business practice was primarily financial services. The firm would be acting as a middle man while charging a fee for services.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if the fee was a one-time fee. Mr. Stockton responded that the fee included hosting, backup, maintenance and design. Mr. Johnson added that there would be an annual fee of \$1,000 to \$2,000. Mr. Stockton noted that staff would always have access to the website content.

Vice Chairperson Bill Wilson questioned if there would be a data cap. Mr. Stockton confirmed, noting that there would be enough data space that he did not believe that Connect Transit would ever reach the limit. Andrew Johnson, General Manager added that staff would manage the site in the most efficient manner possible, citing the example of linking videos to YouTube as opposed to posting them on the website.

Chairperson Buchanan reiterated that there would be an annual fee in addition to the one-time set up fee. Steve Stockton, IT Manager, confirmed.

Secretary Mike McCurdy questioned if staff had the opportunity to test and try out the content management software. Mr. Stockton replied that they had not however; they did have the opportunity to watch a video on how to use the software. It was his opinion that this firm's product was the best fit for Connect Transit. Trustee McCurdy questioned who would provide the graphics for the website. Mr. Stockton responded that the graphics would come from stock photos, and/or photos generated by Connect Transit through community outreach.

Trustee McCurdy stated that he liked the idea of using community generated photos, but noted that in some cases, professional photography would be needed. Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that he believed that Civica Software's website design product would be good at the start but would continue to improve with time. Mr. Stockton agreed, noting that the website would have additional capabilities such as email and employee applications. Mr. Johnson noted that in addition to reviewing other websites designed by Civica, staff had firsthand communications with their staff members during the interview process.

Secretary Mike McCurdy noted that the firm was based in California and questioned if it was branching out into other states. Steve Stockton, IT Manager confirmed, and noted that in addition, the firm was branching out into designing websites for government entities.

Vice Chairman Bill Wilson questioned if Connect Transit would have ownership of the website content. Mr. Stockton confirmed and stated that Connect Transit would have complete ownership of the website and content, and could be transported to a different hosting site if necessary.

Vice Chairman Bill Wilson questioned if there were any companies that designed websites for transit systems exclusively. Andrew Johnson, General Manager responded that there were none. Many transit systems created their own website designs, some used their advertising agencies and others hire design firms. To his knowledge there were no set firms that created website design solely for transit systems.

Trustee Felicia Shaw questioned if the agreement to hire Civica Software was a multiyear contract. Mr. Johnson responded that the initial fee was for design, content and hosting for the first year, and each additional year would constitute another one (1) year agreement.

Steve Stockton, IT Manager showed the Board some website examples that have been designed by Civica Software. Andrew Johnson, General Manager noted that the firm had a lot of experience with smaller organizations such as Connect Transit, as well as larger organizations.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan stated that having the ability to update the website was critical. Mr. Johnson agreed, and stated that staff would be available to update the website daily.

Trustee Ryan Whitehouse arrived at 4:58 p.m. He apologized for being late. Staff updated Trustee Whitehouse on the discussion regarding the Website Design RFP.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if the Board had any additional questions regarding the Website Design RFP. There being none, she requested a motion to approve the selection.

Motion by Trustee Ryan Whitehouse, seconded by Trustee Felicia Shaw that the Website Design Services RFP 13-07 is awarded to Civica Software in the amount of \$60,780 and the General Manager is authorized to execute the necessary documents.

Ayes: Chairman Judy Buchanan, Vice-Chairman Bill Wilson, Secretary Mike McCurdy, Trustees John Bowman, Felicia Shaw, John Thomas and Ryan Whitehouse.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager introduced the second item on the New Business Agenda, Award of Fuel Contract Supplier RFP 13-06. He reminded the board that Connect Transit had begun hedging its fuel costs a few years prior. A portion of the fuel purchased by Connect Transit is purchased on the “spot market,” where staff contact’s fuel suppliers and purchase from the lowest priced provider. The remaining portion of fuel is purchased through a contract which allows Connect Transit to lock in a fuel price for both diesel and gas. Mr. Andrew stated that Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director was successful at timing the fuel market and over the last couple of years; Connect Transit has been saving money on its fuel expenses. Staff is recommended that the fuel contract be awarded to Evergreen FS.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if Connect Transit had contracted fuel from Evergreen FS previously. Mr. Johnson confirmed and stated that Connect Transit had been contracting with Evergreen FS for a few years. Chairperson Buchanan questioned if staff were pleased with the service that had been provided by Evergreen FS. Mr. Johnson confirmed. He noted that only local providers will submit a bid, and Evergreen FS has been the most responsive to both “spot market” and contract fuel purchase and is a local company.

Vice Chairman Bill Wilson questioned the percentage of the annual usage this purchase represented. Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director responded that it represented eighty percent (80%) of Connect Transit’s annual fuel usage.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if the Board had any additional questions regarding the Award of Fuel Contract Supplier. There being none, she requested a motion to approve the selection.

Motion by Trustee John Thomas, seconded by Vice Chairman Bill Wilson that the Fuel Contract Supplier RFP 13-06 is awarded to Evergreen FS for the firm price for mark up and freight per gallon price of \$.08 for the term of five (5) years and the General Manager be authorized to execute the necessary documents.

Ayes: Chairman Judy Buchanan, Vice-Chairman Bill Wilson, Secretary Mike McCurdy, Trustees John Bowman, Felicia Shaw, John Thomas and Ryan Whitehouse.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager introduced the third and final item on the New Business Agenda, Award of Copier Lease. He stated that as technology changes it was more cost effective to lease copiers. This is a common business practice as technology is constantly changing, and the cost of maintenance can be high. A lease agreement includes maintenance of the equipment with the monthly fee.

In addition to replacing the existing leased copiers, the Maintenance Department has a need to have its own copier/printer. As technology has advanced, the Maintenance Department has grown from what used to be a paper and pencil operation into a more computerized operation. Mr. Johnson cited the examples of the need to create, analyze and print reports, and computerized inventory.

Mr. Johnson stated that the current lease had expired. The copier in the Administration and in Dispatch areas would be replaced and an additional copier would be leased for the Maintenance Department.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if Ricoh was the current provider for Connect Transit's copiers. Mr. Johnson confirmed. He stated that staff had been pleased with the product and service provided. He noted that the equipment has been reliable.

Trustee John Thomas questioned if the lease agreement was on a per copy basis. Steve Stockton, IT Manager confirmed.

Secretary Mike McCurdy questioned if the copiers were networked multi-functional devices (MFD). Mr. Stockton confirmed. Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that the device could also email and fax.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if the Board had any additional questions regarding the Award for Copier Lease. There being none, she requested a motion to approve the selection.

Motion by Secretary Mike McCurdy, seconded by Trustee Felicia Shaw that the thirty-six (36) month firm fixed price lease contract with Ricoh in the amount of \$26,419.32 be approved and the General Manager be authorized to execute the necessary documents.

Ayes: Chairman Judy Buchanan, Vice-Chairman Bill Wilson, Secretary Mike McCurdy, Trustees John Bowman, Felicia Shaw, John Thomas and Ryan Whitehouse.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

## **GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT:**

Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that he wanted to thank Connect Transit staff for their dedication during the weather related shut down of the buses and facility. He thanked Roy Rickert, Operations Director, Tom Crouch, Maintenance Director, Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager and Dave White, Safety and Training Director for their hard work notifying both Connect Transit staff and the public that the buses and facility would be shut down. He had not received any complaints, and stated that they all did an excellent job getting the word out.

Mr. Johnson stated that it was a difficult decision but with the amount of snowfall and subzero temperatures it was too dangerous. He noted that other organizations followed suit after Connect Transit's decision to close, in addition, it was important to keep as many vehicles off of the roads so that snow plows could clear the roads.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan agreed and stated that it was the right decision.

Mr. Johnson stated that Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager had prepared a report to present to the Board, and he requested that she address the Board with the information.

Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager addressed the Board. She stated that in the month of December, Connect Transit sponsored "Stuff the Bus" in connection with the Crisis Nursery of Children's Home and Aid. IT was the eleventh (11<sup>th</sup>) year in a row that Connect Transit has partnered with the Crisis Nursery of Children's Home and Aid, and 2013 was a record breaking year for number of items collected. Just less than 5,000 items were collected, which was a 28% increase over past years. Staff was really proud of this partnership.

Mrs. Sorenson also shared that Connect Transit was a first time partner for the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Children's Christmas Party that is sponsored by the Bloomington-Normal Trades and Labor Assembly and the McLean County Chamber of Commerce. The Christmas party serves children from families of the unemployed and underemployed. 2013 is the first year the Connect Transit had been approached to provide transportation service for the party. Nearly 400 families participated in the event. Connect Transit had a table at the event and provided some free Connect Transit merchandise. She hoped to participate again in 2014 and to expand and grow the event.

In addition to the partnership for the Annual Children's Christmas Party, Connect Transit expanded to include the "Holiday Express". Mrs. Sorenson stated that as with any pilot program a lot of knowledge was gained from this first event. A total of 260 riders took advantage of the "Holiday Express". It was her hope to expand and increase ridership on the "Holiday Express" in 2014.

Trustee Ryan Whitehouse questioned the additional cost of the “Holiday Express” to Connect Transit. Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager stated that there was approximately \$260 in lost revenue. Andrew Johnson, General Manager added that the total cost to operate the buses including the lost revenue was approximately \$400 to \$500. He noted that a lot of people were excited about the service.

Trustee Whitehouse stated that in future years there would be the possibility of advertising and/or sponsorship to help offset the cost. Mr. Johnson agreed and stated that he was encouraged by the response that was received by Eastland Mall and the Shoppes at College Hills. He noted that there was not much lead time in 2013 for the event, and that the due to such short timing, the ridership on the “Holiday Express” was what was expected. Staff would begin planning early in 2014 for the service which should increase ridership.

Secretary Mike McCurdy stated that the “Holiday Express” had marketing value. People who otherwise do not use public transit may take advantage of the service. Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager agreed. She stated that during the event she had the opportunity to talk with some of the riders. They were very appreciative of the direct route and express service between transfer stations. She believed that the knowledge gained from this event was invaluable.

Trustee John Thomas questioned if any thought had been given to expand the service to other events such as the McLean County Fair. Andrew Johnson, General Manager replied that it would be possible, and a good idea to look into. He stated that staff would be focused on community outreach in 2014.

Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager stated that in addition to “Stuff the Bus” and the “Holiday Express”, a represented and non-represented employees holiday social activity took place on December 18, 2013. Hot chocolate and treats were provided and open to all employees. This was an opportunity for leadership to establish some holiday reprieve and cheer. The feedback she had received was positive. She was very proud of the event. She informed the Board that leadership is making an intentional effort to break down the barriers between the represented and non-represented employees.

Finally, Mrs. Sorenson informed the Board that she has continued working on the rebranding by replacing the old Bloomington Normal Public Transit (BNPTS) logo with the new Connect Transit logos.

Trustee John Thomas requested that the Board be invited to participate in future represented and non-represented employee activities. Andrew Johnson, General Manager stated that there would be quarterly opportunities.

Trustee Ryan Whitehouse questioned any outreach activity to local businesses. Jennifer Sorenson, Community Relations Manager responded that discussions were being held for a strategy plan for reaching out to the different businesses and organizations within the community. Chairperson Judy Buchanan thanked Mrs. Sorenson for her efforts.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager informed the Board that the National Transit Database Report was complete. Roy Rickert, Operations Director and Pat Kuebrich, Finance Director had resolved the issues. He expected that a clean report would be provided to the Board within the coming months.

Mr. Johnson stated that he had submitted comments on behalf of Connect Transit related to the Transit Safety and Transit Asset Management advance notice of proposed rulemaking. He stated that the State Government is preparing legislation regarding state of good repair and safety. He had worked closely with the American Public Transit Association to craft the response to further drive home the impact that some of this legislation will have on smaller transit systems. He noted that Connect Transit is better suited than some small systems since its Board allows for and is willing to pay for training.

Mr. Johnson informed the Board that budget preparation would begin soon. He believed that it was important for the Board to be involved in the process. He reminded the Board the Ex-Officio Trustee David Hales had stated that it was important to consider the best and worst case scenarios when preparing the budget.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned when some preliminary numbers would be available for the Board to review. Mr. Johnson responded that he hoped to have some information available by the February Board meeting. Chairperson Buchanan questioned if a separate meeting would be needed from the regular Board meeting. Mr. Johnson replied that a Work Session could be planned. His goal was to have the budget prepared by the state imposed deadline, so he would bring some preliminary numbers to the Board very soon.

Secretary Mike McCurdy questioned how Transit fared in the Federal Budget. Andrew Johnson, General Manager replied that there were no attempts to defund transit systems. He noted that a gas tax could impact the 2015 budget.

#### **TRUSTEE COMMENTS:**

Chairperson Judy Buchanan reminded the Board that the next regular Board meeting would be held on January 28, and a 4<sup>th</sup> Strategic Planning Session would be held on January 11, 2014 at the Four Seasons Club on Airport Road.

Chairperson Buchanan stated that the Advocacy Committee met and she believed the minutes from that meeting would be on the January 11, 2014 Strategic Planning Agenda for approval. She noted that a lot of good discussion was had at the meeting and several ideas were discussed for reaching out to Local, State and Federal governments.

The American Public Transit Association (APTA) Legislative Conference would be held in Washington, DC March 10, 2014 through March 12, 2014. There were funds in the budget for attendance.

Secretary Mike McCurdy questioned if there would be an APTA conference in Champaign, IL. Andrew Johnson, General Manager confirmed. The conference in Champaign was a legislative and university conference. Secretary McCurdy stated that he was interested in attending it.

Chairperson Judy Buchanan questioned if any of the Board had any additional comments to make. There were none.

Andrew Johnson, General Manager introduced Danny Rich, Maintenance Supervisor to the Board. Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Rich had a wealth of information and expertise in maintenance and engines. Chairperson Buchanan welcomed Mr. Rich.

There being no further business, Chairperson Judy Buchanan requested that a motion be made to adjourn to executive session.

Motion by Secretary Mike McCurdy, seconded by Trustee John Bowman that the meeting be adjourned to executive session.

Ayes: Chairman Judy Buchanan, Vice-Chairman Bill Wilson, Secretary Mike McCurdy, Trustees John Bowman, Felicia Shaw, John Thomas and Ryan Whitehouse.

Nays: None

Motion passed.

Time: 5.45 P.M.