

CONNECT TRANSIT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING
August 27, 2013

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 on August 27, 2013 at 4:30 p.m.

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

TRUSTEES ABSENT: Ryan Whitehouse

CITY MANAGERS: Mark Peterson, Town of Normal

STAFF PRESENT: Andrew Johnson, General Manager
Roy Rickert, Operations Director
Jenifer Clark, Human Resources Director
Isaac Thorne, Procurement Director
Patrick Kuebrich, Finance Director
Tom Crouch, Maintenance Supervisor
Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT: David R. Calhoon, ATU 752
Joan Fenton, Citizen
John Marley, Siemens
Sam Moravec, Citizen
Vasudha Pinnamaraju, McLean County Regional Planning
Jennifer Sicks, McLean County Regional Planning

Call to Order

Ms. Judy Buchanan, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Roll call was taken.

Mr. Mark Peterson, City Manager for the Town of Normal, introduced Ms. Vasudha Pinnamaraju the newly appointed Executive Director for McLean County Regional

Planning Commission. Ms. Pinnamaraju comes to Regional Planning from Decatur and has been on the job about a week. Mr. Peterson stated he serves on the executive committee for McLean County Regional Planning Commission and was involved in the hiring process. Mr. Peterson continued Ms. Pinnamaraju is a graduate of Iowa State University with a degree in Urban and Regional Planning. She is also an architect and was with the city of Decatur for eight years where she was involved in a variety of planning experiences. Mr. Peterson commented Ms. Pinnamaraju is anxious to permanently move her family to the Bloomington-Normal Area.

Ms. Pinnamaraju thanked Mr. Peterson for his introduction. Ms. Pinnamaraju stated Bloomington-Normal is a wonderful area and she is anxious to get her family settled here. She is enjoying being at Regional Planning and getting her feet wet. Ms. Pinnamaraju is happy to meet the Trustees and is looking forward to working with the Board in the future.

Mr. Peterson added Ms. Pinnamaraju is a strong supporter of public transportation and public transit systems and she wants to work closely with the Board.

Ms. Jennifer Sicks, Transportation Planner with the McLean County Regional Planning Commission, commented Ms. Pinnamaraju immediately threw herself into the job with vigor and enthusiasm.

Chairman Buchanan thanked Ms. Pinnamaraju and Ms. Sicks for attending the meeting.

Public Comments

Chairman Buchanan announced Ms. Joan Fenton wished to make public comments and asked Ms. Fenton to take the floor.

Ms. Fenton stated she is here as a representative of the residents of Phoenix Towers. Ms. Fenton continued there are around one hundred fifty residents at Phoenix Towers and the majority of them are over sixty five years old. A majority of the residents are handicapped or disabled in some way. Ms. Fenton stated the new bus route imposes a hardship on residents trying to get up the incline to the street to get to the bus stop. Previously, the bus came down into the drive and stopped right in front of the building which was convenient for everyone. Ms. Fenton stated that now they have to go up the incline of the driveway to the street to get to where the bus stops. Ms. Fenton concluded she was here to represent all the residents who are affected by this hardship which the new route restructures have created.

Chairman Buchanan thanked Ms. Fenton for her comments.

Mr. Mike McCurdy asked Mr. Andrew Johnson, General Manager, if any progress had been made in discussions with Phoenix Towers. Chairman Buchanan stated the Board

is aware of the problem and that there have been some discussions with management of Phoenix Towers.

Mr. Johnson stated he and Mr. Dave White, Safety and Training Director, met with Ms. Fenton about a week ago and were made aware of some construction at Phoenix Towers as part of a rehabilitation of the building. Ms. Fenton pointed out there may be an opportunity to provide a better place for the residents to enter and exit the building and get to the street. Mr. Johnson stated staff will be meeting with Phoenix Towers' management to explore those options and see what we can do to effect a change.

Mr. Johnson commented the current drive way for Phoenix Towers will not support the forty foot buses. The thirty foot buses in the fleet are nearing the end of their useful life and will be replaced in time with the larger buses. It is in our best interest to find the safest, most convenient and workable solution for the residents. Mr. Johnson stated we are working to find a long term solution.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. John Thomas pointed out the Board Officer title changes were not reflected in the list of members present. Those titles changed as of July 1, 2013.

Mr. John Bowman noted several misspelled words in the minutes and public hearing notes which also needed correcting.

Mr. Bill Wilson inquired if there was a protocol used as how attendees were listed and how their affiliations were determined. Mr. Johnson stated he would list them alphabetically and according to their affiliation, if they had one. Ms. Trish Tilton, Administrative Assistant, stated in this instance the attendees were listed as they signed in for the public hearing and if they did not list an affiliation, then just their city was listed.

On a motion by Mr. Bowman, and a second by Mr. Thomas, the Board voted to approve the Board Minutes for July 30, 2013 with the above mentioned corrections.

Items Removed From Consent Agenda

Mr. Mike McCurdy asked to remove the disbursement to WGLT from the list, allowing for it to be voted on separately, and he could abstain from that vote.

Consent Agenda

Mr. Wilson inquired about the transfer of Illinois Funds to Commerce Bank. Mr. Johnson explained our checks from the State of Illinois are deposited into our Illinois Funds account and then transferred to Commerce Bank. We are keeping the Illinois

Funds account anticipating a direct deposit option for our State of Illinois checks. Currently, those checks come to Connect Transit in the mail.

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

- 1. Review and Approve July Financial Statements**
- 2. Review and Receive July Capital and Self-Insurance Reserve Fund Balances**
- 3. Review and Receive July Monthly Ridership Report**

Chairman Buchanan requested the Trustees consider the August Disbursements for approval.

- 1. Review and Approve August Disbursements**

On a motion by Mr. Wilson, and a second by Ms. Shaw, the Board voted to approve the August Disbursements.

Mr. Peterson commented for future reference, at the beginning of the Consent Agenda discussion a Trustee may state he wishes to abstain from voting on a particular item listed. The Board may then approve and vote on the complete Consent Agenda without that Trustee's vote and without removing an item completely.

Old Business

Mr. Johnson stated there is no old business.

New Business

- 1. Request for Approval to Purchase Bus Destination Signs**

Mr. Johnson stated we recently purchased eight 1998 forty foot Gillig buses from California. These buses came with flipdot destination signs. In July Connect Transit began upgrading all our operation control units on all the thirty and forty foot buses. This upgrade was needed to replace outdated technology and streamline the programming of the destination signs. The flipdot destination signs in the new forty foot buses have old hardware that is not cooperating with the new operation control units.

Mr. Johnson explained the solution is to purchase Smart Series destination signs from Luminator. These new destination signs will standardize the fleet with the same upgraded technology and allow flexibility of operations for maintenance and the transportation department. These destinations signs will transfer out of the buses at the end of their usable life into any new replacement bus. The cost of replacing the

destination signs on all of the forty foot buses will not exceed a cost of \$36,000.00. This will be funded out of the operating budget.

Mr. Johnson explained we already have Twin Vision signs and Luminator purchased Twin Vision so they are now one and the same. These are for the signs on the front, side, and rear of the buses. This purchase will be for all eight of the new forty foot buses. This is a good investment as these signs will be used long after these buses have been replaced.

Mr. Bowman inquired if there is technology available that can provide scrolling messages inside the buses. Mr. Johnson responded yes there is. We do not have that technology currently however, it is something we can look into in the future.

On a motion by Mr. Thomas, and a second by Mr. Bowman, the Trustees voted to approve the purchase of new bus destination signs.

General Manager's Report

Mr. Johnson introduced Ms. Jenifer Clark, the new Human Resources Director to the Board.

1. Strategic Planning Update

Mr. Johnson reported it has been difficult to pick times and dates that are best for the majority of Trustees. Mr. Johnson stated currently we have three dates picked, but no locations have been determined yet. On Thursday, September 19th staff will meet. Then on Saturday, September 21st the Trustees and staff will have the initial "kick off" meeting beginning at 8:00 a.m. On Saturday, October 12th there will be a session for just the Board, also beginning at 8:00 a.m. These meetings will determine the pace and when the next meetings will be.

2. Route Restructuring Update

Mr. Johnson stated we are collecting ridership data. This process began the week before Illinois State University students returned to town. It is still early, but the numbers indicate we have lost a few of the regular riders on the original segment of the Teal J route and have picked up new riders on the segment of the Teal J that services Corporate South. Mr. Johnson continued we have not received much negative feedback except the State Farm Corporate Building is having some issues. We are meeting tomorrow morning with the head of transportation for State Farm to discuss the problems. The rest of the routes appear to be doing well. Several routes went down on their times due to multiple wheelchair boardings and extra riders, however they were able to make up the time because of the extra time built into the routes. The customers

seem to be adapting to the new routes. Mr. Johnson stated staff will continue to monitor the routes and get some concrete data.

Mr. McCurdy inquired if a new section could be added in the ridership report to just report the new leg of the Teal J route that services Corporate South. Mr. Johnson responded that should be possible to have ready by next month.

3. Upcoming Presentations

Mr. Johnson commented he will be making several presentations on Connect Transit at the APTA meeting in Chicago. One presentation will review the community outreach aspect to the route restructuring, how we rebooted and changed our whole approach after the initial attempt to restructure the routes, and the lessons we learned. Also APTA has approached Mayor Koos to serve on a panel about local funding. Mr. Johnson continued Mayor Koos has asked Mr. Johnson to serve in his place.

Mr. Mark Peterson added Mr. Johnson presented an overview of what has been happening at Connect Transit at the Normal Town Council meeting and was met with a good reception. Many good questions were posed from the Council.

Referring back to the route restructure discussion, Mr. Bowman inquired as to how staff was responding to the concerns from the public. Mr. Johnson responded the concerns are addressed on a case by case basis and the questions are directed to whoever is best qualified to respond. Some of the concerns stem from an incorrect assumption of what service is available. Other situations involve rare instances where customers had no idea these changes were happening even though it had been discussed extensively over the past year. Mr. Bowman commented that perhaps the interior messaging signs would be very helpful in communicating changes to the riders. It would be very helpful to display changes and updates on the vehicles the riders use. Mr. Bowman continued his main concern is that Connect Transit is communicating with the public and that we are addressing and being responsive to the concerns that are being expressed. Mr. Johnson added every question is receiving a response. It may not be the answer the person wants to hear, but every concern is being addressed.

Correspondence and Media

Chairman Buchanan stated there are several newspaper articles in the Board Packet.

Trustee Comments

Mr. McCurdy noted the Pantagraph article about "Light the Night" on September 5th when 500 sets of bicycle lights will be passed out to bicyclists who come with their bikes to the event. There will be a Connect Transit bus at the event providing an opportunity for riders to try the bike rack on the bus. Connect Transit, Uptown Normal, Good to Go,

Bike BloNo, and Uptown Partners are partnering to help educate bicyclists about the law requiring a bike light. It is a great way to reach these cyclists. Anyone trying out the bus bike rack will receive a free prize. The bike lights are branded with the Connect Transit logo.

Mr. Johnson added from day one we have been talking about first mile, last mile. This program ties right into that and how our riders are getting to the bus. It is a great way to build a relationship with the biking community. It will also provide a relaxed, no rush opportunity to try the bike rack on the bus. Connect Transit sees this as an “ice breaker” opportunity.

Chairman Buchanan stated our General Manager has completed two full years. August 8th was his anniversary date. It is time for the Board to have a review. At the next meeting we will do that review. Chairman Buchanan continued September 24th is also the same date of the McLean County Chamber of Commerce Elected Officials Reception. We would like to have both staff and Trustees available to attend the reception. The elected officials are the ones we need to continue to reinforce our relationship with and be sure they understand what a good job Connect Transit is doing. Chairman Buchanan suggested the meeting in September begin at 4:00 p.m. in hopes that it would end by 5:30 or 6:00 p.m. which would allow enough time to still attend the reception. Chairman Buchanan also suggested having the meeting at Uptown Station to eliminate driving to get to the reception following the monthly meeting. The Trustees were all agreeable to those suggestions. The Elected Officials Reception runs from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Request for Executive Session

Chairman Buchanan stated there was no request for an executive session.

Adjournment

There being no further public business, on a motion by Mr. McCurdy, and a second by Ms. Shaw, the Trustees voted to adjourn the public meeting at 5:05 p.m.

Mike McCurdy, Secretary