



**March 19, 2021**

**AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on March 19, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. via video conference. President Schrader called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m. with Trustees Beatty-Hansen, Jeffrey, Ludwig and Schainker present via video conference.

**ELECTRONIC MEETING DECLARATION:** This meeting is being held electronically because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Governor of Iowa's Public Health Disaster Emergency Declaration which included limits on public gatherings; therefore, it is impractical to hold an in-person meeting. (§21.8(1)(c) and §21.3)

**APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 19, 2021 MINUTES:** Trustee Beatty-Hansen made a motion to adopt the February 19, 2021 transit board minutes as presented and Trustee Jeffrey seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**ARTICULATED BUS PURCHASE:** Director Neal stated that the Alternatives Analysis Study and System Redesign Study found that all articulated buses should be operated on the #23 Orange Route. CyRide has been working to increase the number of these buses in the fleet and CyRide currently has six NOVA articulated buses. She said that four upgrades from 40-foot to 60-foot buses have been programmed into the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) over the next four years, with one upgrade per year, bringing the articulated bus fleet to ten.

Director Neal reviewed the FY 21 budget that was included in the CIP for the purchase of an articulated bus. She shared that it has been determined the most cost-effective method for purchasing an articulated bus is to utilize the State of Washington's contract for procurement. The contract offers NOVA as a manufacturer and the preliminary pricing of \$764,740 has been determined. Director Neal stated that finalized pricing will be available approximately six months prior to the bus being built; technology additions are still being considered but would be within the overall project budget.

Trustee Jeffrey questioned whether the bigger buses would have a problem fitting in the facility. Director Neal said that space would be tight, but they would fit inside the garage. James Rendall, Assistant Director – Fleet and Facilities shared that lanes three through seven would be able to accommodate the larger buses because they are longer.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1 to move CyRide closer to the goal of operating only articulated buses on the #23 Orange routes. This new bus will also help CyRide achieve its Transit Asset Management (TAM) plan goals and increase the overall sustainability of the fleet.

Trustee Jeffrey made a motion to adopt Alternative #1, to approve the award of contract for one 60-foot articulated bus to NOVA Bus of Plattsburg, New York, for a total not-to-exceed amount of \$860,903. Trustee Ludwig seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

**TEN-YEAR AGREEMENT FOR TRANSIT SERVICES:** Director Neal stated that the Transit Board has oversight of a joint agreement for transit services between the City of Ames, Iowa State University, and Iowa State University Student Government. She provided a brief overview of the contents of the agreement, stating that it addresses the budgeting process, liability responsibility, disposition of property, and other concerns. Director Neal explained the current agreement expires on June 30, 2021; a continued agreement is being proposed with a ten-year term and updated references to Iowa State University Student Government. She said that approval is contingent on the approval of Iowa State University, Iowa State Board of Regents, the City of Ames, and Iowa State University Student Government.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1, to enter into an updated agreement for transit services. She said that the arrangement has allowed CyRide to provide a higher level of service and reduced duplication of services.

Trustee Ludwig made a motion to approve a new transit agreement entitled, "An Agreement for Joint Action in Support of Transit Services in the City of Ames" covering a ten-year period beginning July 1, 2021 and distribute the document to the signatory agencies for their review and consideration. Trustee Jeffrey seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

**HIRTA CONTRACT AND ANNUAL CUSTOMER SURVEY:** Director Neal stated that CyRide is required to provide complementary paratransit services for those unable to use the fixed route buses. CyRide has contracted this service, known as Dial-A-Ride (DAR), since 2003. She said that Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) has been the contractor since 2012. The current contract with HIRTA expires June 30, 2021 and has the option of extending for an additional two-years.

Director Neal reviewed the three areas of the service that CyRide monitors, including annual DAR customer survey results, performance measures, and proposed renewal rates. She stated that this year the survey had a larger response rate of 30.2% because volunteers from Central Iowa RSVP contacted customers via telephone to complete the survey. Results showed that customers were more satisfied and believed services improved since 2020. Director Neal reviewed performance measures for the previous two fiscal years, stating that the measures for 2020 were affected by lower ridership during the pandemic. HIRTA has expressed interest in continuing as a sub-contractor for the paratransit service; a 3% contract increase has been proposed by HIRTA.

Director Neal explained that sub-contracting the service allows CyRide to use Section 5310 “Elderly and Disabled” federal funding at a rate of 80% for the operating costs. She said that we receive approximately \$284,000 in Section 5310 fund each year to support services that benefit seniors and individuals with disabilities. If the service is not sub-contracted, local funding partners are responsible for the cost.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1, to continue the contract with HIRTA to provide DAR service for the next fiscal year. Continuing this contract supports the federally required complementary paratransit system for the Ames community, keeps service consistent for passengers, and avoids the high cost of CyRide directly operating the DAR service.

Trustee Jeffrey made a motion to approve continuing the contract with Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) for FY 2022 at a 3.0% increase for weekday trips. Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

## **MONTHLY REPORT:**

**Intermodal Leases:** Three tenants occupy the Ames Intermodal Facility: Executive Express, Jefferson Lines, and the Ames Police Department Safe Neighborhood Team. The leases state that each year the rates are evaluated based on the Producer Price Index, with a maximum increase of 3%. Board member feedback was requested regarding keeping the rates the same due to the unique economic conditions created by the pandemic. President Schrader said he felt it was fair to keep the same rate. Trustee Schainker commented that the budget was reviewed by Trustee Cain and himself and it would still create an excess to fund future maintenance. Director Neal will have the Legal Department review the contracts, prepare any necessary contract amendments, and bring the items back to the board for formal consideration.

**Houck Contract:** CyRide is in the fourth year of a contract for advertising services on the interior and exterior of buses that expires on June 30, 2021. Last year the board approved a one-year extension of the contract and removed the minimum annual payment guarantee. If the contract is not extended, a request for proposal (RFP) will need to be done. Comments from the board were requested. Trustee Ludwig said he agreed with no minimum payment guarantee. Director Neal will work with Legal and bring the contract extension back to the board for formal consideration.

**ICAAP FFY 2022:** In January CyRide was notified that up to \$415,555 was awarded by the Iowa Department of Transportation under the Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP) grant. Actual costs and revenues will affect the exact amount received and will be put in the operations closing balance.

**Upcoming Federal Reporting Mandate:** The Federal Transit Administration has requested approval of a COVID-19 employee information reporting mandate from the Office of Management and Budget. Rob Jennings, Transit Scheduler/Administrative Analyst, will be working with Human Resources to provide data on a monthly basis.

**Federal Triennial Review:** On March 15, 2021, a four-hour review of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) and Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) funding was completed. On March 29, 2021, a pre-review will be held before the Triennial Review scheduled for April 12, 2021. Information will be reported to the board following the review.

**American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARP):** \$30.5 billion was included for public transit when it was signed into law on March 11, 2021. The funds will provide relief to transit agencies by supporting operating revenues. Webinar trainings are being attended to determine the details and eligibility requirements for utilizing the funds. Any relevant items will be brought to the board for consideration.

**Assistant Director of Fleet and Facilities:** James Rendall was named the Assistant Director of Fleet and Facilities. James has been at CyRide for 14 years and has been serving in the capacity since last April.

**Spring Meeting Dates/Times:**

- April 16, 2021 at 2:00pm
- May 21, 2021 at 2:00pm

**Adjourn:** Trustee Ludwig made a motion to approve adjourning at 2:30pm. Trustee Jeffrey seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

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Jacob Schrader, President

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Julie Brouard, Recording Secretary