



September 15, 2021

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on September 15, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. in the CyRide Conference room. President Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 4:31 p.m. with Trustees Beatty-Hansen, Cain, Jeffrey, Ludwig, and Ríos Martínez present.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 11, 2021 MINUTES: Trustee Ludwig made a motion to adopt the August 11, 2021 Transit Board minutes as presented, and Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 6 Nays: None) Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH IUOE LOCAL 234 FOR CYRIDE SHIFT PREMIUM FOR MOONLIGHT EXPRESS: Director Neal requested a shift premium increase for Moonlight Express shifts that are difficult to fill because of the late-night 10:30 p.m.-2:30 a.m. time span. She said that the bargaining agreement, which is in effect until June of 2022, sets the wages for the position, and currently, there is a \$0.50 per hour shift premium for the Moonlight Express shifts. The \$1.50 per hour increase being requested would bring the total premium to \$2.00 per hour.

Director Neal explained that due to the timing of the Transit Board meeting, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was presented at the City Council meeting on September 14, 2021, which was approved, pending formal board approval. The IUOE Local 234 has confirmed their agreement, and the City of Ames Legal Department has reviewed the MOU.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1. Increasing the shift premium for this late-night service is more likely to incentivize drivers to cover these shifts at a very low cost to the organization.

Trustee Cain pointed out that Alternative #1 did not include language to state that the increase is temporary or through the current contract's end.

Trustee Cain made an amended motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 234, authorizing an additional shift premium in the amount of \$1.50 per hour for CyRide Moonlight Express, adding that the increase is through the remainder of the contract ending June 30, 2022. Trustee Ludwig seconded the motion. (Ayes: 6 Nays: None) Motion carried.

FEDERAL SECTION 5307 GRANT APPLICATION – FFY 2022 STBG FUNDING: Director Neal requested authorization to execute and file a Section 5307 Grant application under the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration and dispersed by the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO). If awarded, 2022 would be the third year CyRide would receive \$225,000, which would be used to upgrade a 40-foot heavy-duty diesel bus to a 60-foot articulated bus. Director Neal reviewed the funding plan programmed in the Capital Improvement Plan; the total cost of the upgrade is \$281,250, with a 20% local share of \$56,250. She added that the addition of another articulated bus would bring the fleet total to nine articulated buses.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1. Proceeding with this application would allow CyRide to continue expanding its articulated bus fleet toward the goal of ten articulated buses to operate the #23 Orange Route with these vehicles fully.

Trustee Ludwig made a motion to approve the Transit Director to execute and file a Section 5307 Surface Transportation Block Grant application in the amount of \$225,000 to the Federal Transit Administration. Trustee Ríos Martínez seconded the motion. (Ayes: 6 Nays: None) Motion carried.

2022 HVAC IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT – AWARD OF CONTRACT: Director Neal requested approval of the 2022 heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment improvement project. Bids were released on August 11, 2021, and due on September 8, 2021. In addition, the project's budget and funding sources were reviewed, with \$378,219 from a Public Transit Infrastructure Grant and \$198,353 from local funds for a total project budget of \$576,577.

Director Neal explained the base bid and the two alternates. Alternative #1 included the installation of two skylights where the removal of rooftop units would create openings, and Alternative #2, which integrates the new equipment into the building's mechanical control system. Trustee Cain asked why Alternative #1 was not being recommended since it was within the total project budget. Assistant Director of Fleet and Facilities, James Rendall, explained that the cost for the skylights was higher than expected and the funds could be used elsewhere for a better value. Trustee Ríos Martínez asked how long HVAC equipment lasts. Assistant Director Rendall said that it typically lasts about 15-20 years.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1, to accept the base bid and bid alternative #2 from Stein Heating and Cooling Inc. of Webster City, Iowa, for a total contract award of \$499,600. Approval of the base bid with bid alternative #2 would allow CyRide to replace obsolete HVAC equipment in the facility and permit integration of the new equipment into the existing facility control system.

Trustee Beatty-Hansen made a motion to approve Alternative #1, approve the award of contract to Stein Heating and Cooling Inc. of Webster City, Iowa, for the base bid and alternative #2, at a total cost of \$499,600. Trustee Ríos Martínez seconded the motion. (Ayes: 6 Nays: None) Motion carried.

FY 2021 PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS FUND CLOSING BALANCE TRANSFER TO CAPITAL FUND:

Director Neal explained that the Transit Board has a policy that the operations fund closing balance should be between 7.5-10% of operating expenses. The operations fund activity was reviewed, along with a summary of existing commitments; approximately \$6,000,000 is above the 10% closing balance requirement. Director Neal requested approval to reallocate \$4,500,000 of the uncommitted \$6,000,000 in the operating fund to the capital fund, with \$1,000,000 for the local match portion to support the purchase of ten battery-electric buses, \$2,500,000 to fund the local match portion of 40-foot bus purchases, and \$1,000,000 for the local match portion of a facility expansion or building.

Director Neal said that facility grants usually require a 20% local match, so the \$715,000 currently budgeted, coupled with an additional \$1,000,000 that is being requested for reallocation, could fund a \$7,000,000 building project. She reviewed a five-year proforma reflective of the reallocation, providing projections through FY 2027 based on historical data, pointing out that FY 2027 projected a closing operations fund balance of 11%.

Trustee Cain asked for clarification of the ending balance. Director Neal confirmed that the operations closing balance displayed in the proforma includes \$1,036,051 and would be added to the \$1,500,106 that is above the required 10% closing balance. Trustee Schainker said that the \$4,500,000 could be reallocated from operations to capital and remain undesignated. Director Neal clarified that the projects would still be brought to the board for approval, even if they were designated in the reallocation. Shari Atwood, Transit Planner, commented that sometimes the timeframe for CyRide to commit to available buses is only a few days; coordinating board approval in a tight timeline is sometimes difficult, so having the funds allocated ahead of the process allows timely action.

Further discussion was had about when funding for buses would be drawn and how the system recalibration could affect the agency's needs. Director Neal explained that when the money is drawn is dependent on what becomes available through the grant process and what has the most advantageous local match amounts. She also shared that the system recalibration may not occur in FY 2023 due to concerns with impacts to data as the result of COVID-19 and Iowa State University enrollment.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1. Reallocating funds as identified from the operations fund closing balance to capital programming will meet the fund balance policy and enable CyRide to have the local match needed to proceed with future grant opportunities.

Trustee Ludwig made a motion to approve Alternative #1, authorizing CyRide to reallocate \$4,500,000 of the FY 2021 operations fund closing balance to the capital project fund for a battery-electric bus project, a facility expansion project, and a 40-foot bus replacement fund. Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 6 Nays: None) Motion carried.

SUSTAINABLE TRANSIT FOR A HEALTHY PLANET CHALLENGE: Director Neal said that further information had been received about this initiative since the Board approved the participation component of the challenge in July. Since that meeting, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has delayed the deadline to pledge commitment to the challenge until October 29, 2021. She explained that future discretionary grants could be viewed more favorably if CyRide committed to all three components of the challenge, including developing a plan detailing greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategy, submitting a Transit Board approved plan to the FTA by April 15, 2022, and supporting future challenge-related events.

Director Neal said that the FTA's action plan templates had been reviewed, and it has been determined that CyRide may set goals that are different from the President's goal of GHG reduction by 50-52% from 2005 levels by 2030 and net zero emissions by 2050. She advised that the board would have the ability to set the final plan commitments to align with board priorities and would not have to commit to higher capital spending unless they desired.

Director Neal reviewed CyRide's progress to reduce GHG since 2005, including the construction of a Gold LEED Certified building, HVAC upgrades, installation of Light-Emitting Diode (LED) lighting, purchase of 12 hybrid buses, purchase of 8 articulated buses, replacement of 6 minibuses and the scheduled purchase of 2 battery-electric buses. She also pointed out that CyRide was still utilizing GMC buses in 2005, which had higher emissions. By replacing these buses and several buses throughout the fleet with cleaner-burning buses, significant progress has already been made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from 2005 levels.

Trustees Cain and Schainker inquired what impact not participating in the challenge would have on the agency. Director Neal replied that the ramifications of not participating were currently unknown, but it is believed that future grant opportunities could be viewed less favorably if the agency did not commit to all three components. Trustee Beatty-Hansen shared that the City of Ames City Council is developing a climate action plan and had concerns about differing plans. Trustee Schainker said that the City Council could collaborate with CyRide on the plan. Director Neal confirmed that Shari Atwood, Transit Planner, would be drafting the plan that would be brought to the Transit Board for final approval.

The Transit Director recommended approval of Alternative #1. Participating in the FTA's Sustainable Transit for a Healthy Planet Challenge will demonstrate a commitment to sustainability efforts already in progress by the City of Ames and Iowa State University while allowing the Transit Board flexibility to set climate action goals in line with local priorities.

Trustee Ludwig made a motion to approve Alternative #1, approving participation in the Sustainable Transit for a Healthy Planet Challenge and commitment to develop a climate action or sustainability plan detailing GHG reduction strategies, submit the Transit-Board approved plan to the FTA by April 15, 2022, and support the FTA's initiative by participating in future Challenge-related events. Trustee Ríos Martínez seconded the motion. (Ayes: 6 Nays: None) Motion carried.

MONTHLY REPORT:

Ridership Statistics - First Two Weeks of Fall Semester: Ridership is 77% of the same period levels in 2019. The past three years of daily ridership for the first two weeks of the semester were displayed in a graph. Historically, the first two weeks are not always the best indicators of future ridership, but it does show that people are riding.

Destination Iowa State and WelcomeFest: CyRide was at Hilton Coliseum parking lot for Destination Iowa State to welcome the largest incoming freshman class in the past few years. Information about riding and the automatic passenger counters (APC) project was shared with students to help make them more comfortable with riding. CyRide also participated in WelcomeFest, partnering with other City of Ames representatives to promote activities around Ames, such as "ride CyRide off campus." By talking with representatives, students earned tickets redeemable for a T-shirt listing things to do around town.

Federal Mask Mandate: The Transportation Security Administration has extended the mask requirement through January 18, 2022. Passengers have been complying with the mandate and are wearing masks. Masks will continue to be provided to those that don't have one.

Part-Time Driver Hiring Wage Incentive: The part-time driver hiring wage incentive has been implemented after working with Human Resources and Legal to approve the hiring bonus language. The bonus is paid in three installments, with \$250 in the first paycheck, \$250 upon completion of training, and \$500 after six months of employment. To increase the number of applicants, CyRide has advertised on the City of Ames website, Iowa State University Job Board, Indeed, Monster, Simply Hired, Zip Recruiter, Link Up, Glass Door, Jobs to Career, What Jobs, and the Iowa State Daily, which is in an online-only format. Drivers are currently being hired without their Commercial Driver's License Permit. They are receiving training to obtain the permit and assistance securing an appointment at the Iowa Department of Transportation.

ISU Enrollment: Iowa State University announced that fall semester enrollment is 30,708, which is down from last year. However, the number of new students enrolled has increased. Decreased enrollment will have a significant impact on operations and the budget. Therefore, internal projections are being adjusted to reflect the enrollment number.

2021-2022 ISU Student Fees and Trust Fund Balance: The budget process and analysis have begun. In preparation for the Student Fee Committee meeting, the Student Government Trust Fund will be discussed with the two student board members. A budget shortfall is being projected due to COVID-19 activity fee suspension, lower enrollment, and a 0% increase for the 2020-2021 school year. The Transit Board will be updated as more information is available.

Adjourn: Trustee Ludwig made a motion to approve adjourning at 5:20 p.m. Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 6 Nays: None) Motion carried.

Jacob Ludwig, Vice President

Julie Brouard, Recording Secretary