



**Ames Transit Agency
Board of Trustees**

May 25, 2022

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on May 25, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. in the CyRide Conference room. President Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. with Trustees Beatty-Hansen, Ludwig, and Schainker present.

APPROVAL OF APRIL 27, 2022, MINUTES:

Trustee Beatty-Hansen made a motion to adopt the April 27, 2022, Transit Board minutes as presented; Trustee Ludwig seconded the motion. (Ayes: 4 Nays: 0) Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

RECOGNITION OF NEW BOARD MEMBER:

Transit Director Neal welcomed Rachel Schnepf as the newest student board member. Rachel is a junior in the College of Engineering and is pursuing a degree in computer engineering. She is currently working on an internship this summer in Texas, so she will be joining remotely when able.

TRANSIT BOARD ELECTION OF OFFICERS:

The Transit Board of Trustees elects new officers each year for the positions of President and Vice-President, which is required by the Ames Municipal Code Chapter 26A. Director Neal opened the floor for nominations. Trustee Beatty-Hansen nominated Liz Jeffrey to continue as President; Trustee Schainker seconded. (Ayes: 4 Nays: 0) Motion carried. Trustee Beatty-Hansen nominated Jacob Ludwig to continue as Vice-President; President Jeffrey seconded. (Ayes: 4 Nays: 0) Motion carried. President Jeffrey nominated Jacob Ludwig to continue as the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) representative; Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded. (Ayes 4, Nays: 0) Motion carried.

AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR FY 2023 FUEL PURCHASES:

Director Neal requested approval of the FY 2023 fuel contract. Since 2014, CyRide has been buying fuel on a market rate plus a markup or deduction basis using twelve-month contracts, with the current contract set to end on June 30. On May 16, 2022, CyRide and the City of Ames Purchasing Department released an invitation to bid for the purchase of diesel fuel for the next fiscal year. FTA clauses were added to the bid to allow using FTA money, if necessary, for fuel purchases due to fuel price volatility. REG submitted a bid at the same deduct rate as last year. CyRide conducted a bid analysis and found REG was the best overall value for this contract period. CyRide has budgeted \$1,072,500 for fuel, which anticipates utilizing 390,000 gallons of fuel at \$2.75 per gallon. Director Neal explained that typically the board approves the contract for a not-to-exceed amount equal to the budgeted amount. However, due to fuel price volatility, it is probable CyRide would reach that amount before the end of the fiscal year, and Assistant Director of Fleet and Facilities James Rendall would need to rebuild the fuel contract, which uses additional administrative time and resources and risks getting a less favorable bid. An alternative is to approve the contract for the fiscal year and direct staff to report back to the board if expenses are anticipated to exceed the current fuel budget.

Trustee Beatty-Hansen asked about the Climate Action Plan, and if CyRide buses could be outfitted with the same equipment REG had used on snowplows to run biodiesel in the winter. Assistant Director of Fleet and Facilities Rendall answered that one of the areas of concern with this is that it has not been done on a heavy-duty transit bus, and at this point, it is unknown exactly how well it would work. There was also a short discussion about the price of biodiesel and its affordability. CyRide will monitor the upcoming Fleet Services bid for biodiesel.

Director Neal recommended board approval of Alternative #2 to approve the award of contract to Renewable Energy Group of Ames, Iowa, for fuel purchases from July 1, 2022, until June 30, 2023, and direct staff to report to the Transit Board of Trustees if expenses are anticipated to exceed the current fuel budget. The board has been fiscally responsible, and CyRide has options to weather a short-term fuel volatility situation.

Trustee Ludwig made a motion to approve Alternative #2; Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 4 Nays: 0) Motion carried.

PART-TIME DRIVER ON-CALL COMPENSATION:

Director Neal requested approval to increase the part-time driver on-call wage structure. At the April meeting, the difficulties in hiring and retaining enough part-time drivers were discussed. This problem has continued into the summer schedule. It is estimated that CyRide will spend \$30,000 this summer in overtime to cover open shifts and on-calls until new drivers are hired and trained. In addition, the vacancy rate for on-call shifts over the summer is exceptionally high, with 36% open on weekdays, 88% open on Saturdays, and 100% open on Sundays. The vacancies create operational difficulties when a driver is sick, or if there is an open run. Currently, on-call shifts are paid \$5.00 per hour during the school year and \$1.00 per hour during the summer. Drivers are paid this amount only if they are not used for the on-call. If they are called in, they receive their regular hourly rate. Wages and benefits for drivers are set by a collective bargaining agreement with the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 234, and any changes made by the board would be brought to the Human Resources Director, the Union, and the City Council to ensure all required processes are followed.

Director Neal recommended board approval of Alternative #1 to increase the on-call pay to \$8.00 per hour year-round and add a \$2.00 shift premium, which is estimated to cost \$54,000 per year, improve on-call shift coverage, and help reduce overtime pay.

University Counsel Norton asked if scheduling a driver for a shift instead of an on-call was more advantageous than increasing on-call pay. Director Neal said many transit systems do this and call it an "extra driver" or "standby driver," where the drivers are paid their regular hourly rate. Assistant Director of Operations Christine Crippen clarified that CyRide currently has some positions like this. Director Neal said that when interviewing some of the student drivers, the drivers said they appreciated the flexibility with on-calls because they could still schedule or go to a class since they are given an hour's notice for an on-call shift. Assistant Director of Operations Crippen said that there are drivers without schedules during the summer, and incentivizing the on-call shifts would hopefully help motivate them to sign up for extra shifts and fill the gaps in the schedule. Trustee Jeffrey acknowledged that drivers would feel better when picking that type of schedule because they would get to choose what to work. Director Neal said it is financially better for CyRide not to have standby shifts because then drivers are getting paid their full hourly wage even if there are no driving shifts to cover.

Trustee Schainker made a motion to approve Alternative #1; Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 4 Nays: 0) Motion carried.

PART-TIME DRIVER AND LANE WORKER HIRING WAGE INCENTIVE:

Director Neal requested approval to extend the part-time driver and lane worker wage incentive for FY 2023. In August 2021, the Transit Board approved a temporary hiring wage incentive of \$750 for part-time transit drivers for FY 2022. In October 2021, the Transit Board approved extending this wage incentive to the Lane Worker position. Trustee Ludwig asked if the hiring incentive helped bring in new drivers. Director Neal said 22 drivers were interviewed and confirmed that the \$750 helped incentivize them to apply for the job. In addition, the wage gap is not as big as it used to be between CyRide and other businesses, so the incentive has helped motivate people to apply. Trustee Ludwig mentioned he felt hiring was one of the biggest challenges CyRide has faced over the last year.

Director Neal recommended board approval of Alternative #1 to extend the temporary part-time driver and lane worker incentive wage for next year. It would help improve CyRide's ability to attract new applicants at a cost less than covering shifts with overtime pay.

Trustee Ludwig made a motion to approve Alternative #1; Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 4 Nays: 0) Motion carried.

MONTHLY REPORT:

- **Secretary Position Hired:** Cheryl Spencer has been selected to fill CyRide's Secretary I position.
- **Trademark Usage:** Iowa State University's Trademark Licensing Office has cleared the use of "electriCY'd" on the battery electric buses. The City of Ames Legal Department has reviewed the contract, and their requested changes have been sent to the Licensing Office.
- **Quarterly Report:** Ridership is trending upward. Nationwide there is a slow rebound in ridership. CyRide is 2nd in the nation for rides per capita behind New York City based on the most current NTD report.
- **Roadeo:** CyRide had its Roadeo on May 21, and twenty-one employees competed. Paul Klimesh, Charles Long, Andrew Smith, Brian Grootveld, and Alex Maurer were the top five finishers. Andrew Smith is unable to compete because of his position as a dispatcher; however, the other four will compete in the State competition in Cedar Rapids in July.


Spring meeting dates:

- June 22, 2022, 4:00 p.m.
- July 27, 2022, 4:00 p.m.

Adjourn: Trustee Schainker made a motion to approve adjourning at 4:45 p.m.; Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 4 Nays: 0) Motion carried.



Liz Jeffrey, President



Cheryl Spencer, Recording Secretary