

## AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

November 19, 2008

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on November 19, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. in CyRide's conference room. The meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m. by President Anders. Trustees in attendance: Anders, Hayek, Schainker, Popken and Munoz. Absent: Trustee Madden.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Trustee Hayek made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 29, 2008 Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees meeting. Trustee Schainker seconded. (Motion carried unanimously).

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** No public comments.

**ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING CONTRACT:** Director Kyras explained to the transit board that CyRide has several small reconstruction projects approved in federal grants. The FTA allows transit systems to enter into Indefinite Design/Indefinite Quantity contracts with one architectural/engineering firm to complete these projects over a time period instead of independently bidding each project. She further explained the advantages of this approach by allowing for timely and consistent building design. An RFP (Request for Proposal) was developed and distributed in September with the city receiving six bids. From the six bids, the field was narrowed to two firms: FEH and Shive-Hattery,. These firms were invited to give presentations to CyRide personnel. Following the presentations, Shive-Hattery was chosen to be the best fit for the engineering type projects CyRide has approved and anticipates in the next several years.

Board members asked further questions about the advantages of this type of contract. Rich Leners, Asst. Director - Fleet and Facilities indicated there were several reasons:

- The firm would be familiar with each project
- Saves money
- Provides continuity; the firm is always on call and there is no delay waiting for architect services
- The projects are small allowing CyRide to contact the firm anytime technical expertise is needed

Transit board members were also concerned with committing to one firm if future projects were not approved or if there were concerns about the firms work. Rich Leners assured the transit board there were multiple clauses in the contract that would allow CyRide to cancel it if it was in the transit systems best interest. He further stated that the contract would follow federal procurement regulations that required these types of clauses.

Trustee Hayek made a motion to approve the award of an Indefinite Design/Indefinite Quantity, three-year contract to Shive-Hattery for a not to exceed contract amount of \$250,000 and negotiated costs for individual reconstruction projects. Motion seconded by Trustee Popken. (Motion on the floor approved unanimously.)

**LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS:** Director Kyras reported she attended an Interim Legislative Committee meeting in Des Moines on November 14, 2008 where statewide transit concerns and potential solutions were discussed. She indicated that the committee listen to testimony on concerns about the effect volatile fuel prices were having on transit systems at a time when public transit was experiencing record ridership levels with more than 1.5 million additional rides last year. Legislators were told about effect that declining state transit revenues were having on transit systems as well. She explained that CyRide depends on state funding to provide service to Ames residents.

Additionally, Ms. Kyras explained that a consultant study of transit needs, potential revenue sources and solutions to statewide transit issues will be conducted over the next year. She indicated that due to the current amount of state interest in transit and the opportunity the new federal transportation bill would provide for additional, possibly new funding, significant changes could be made that would shape transit funding for CyRide. She then detailed possible state and federal positions that could be communicated with state legislators and federal congressmen. The state positions that would benefit CyRide include:

- RIIF (Reinvest in Iowa Infrastructure Fund) – Continue funding transit vertical infrastructure by providing \$2.2 million in FY10 RIIF funding. CyRide’s Administration building was funded with this program and the recently approved old bus wash bay rehabilitation. CyRide has received \$1.3 million over the past three years from this fund.
- New Transit Fund – Request \$1 million dollars in funding for transit systems to expand services or fund fare reductions. If approved this could possibly be a source for funding CyRide’s citywide fare free program.
- Transit Employee Safety - This request would change Section 708.3A of the Iowa Code that would deliver higher fines and penalties to individuals assaulting a transit employee.
- State Capital Fund– Request \$5 million dollars in state capital funds to reduce transit systems high fleet age. Support for this could lead to additional bus replacement funding so that CyRide could modernize its bus fleet faster.

The last recommendation Director Kyras explained was being considered by the Iowa Public Transit Association; however, she indicated that she could not support the changes at this time as they would restructure the way state transit

funding was distributed within the state. Some changes would benefit CyRide and others could jeopardize existing funding.

Director Kyras asked the transit board for their opinions on these positions or suggestions. Transit board members asked how these priorities would be communicated with legislators. Ms. Kyras indicated that as Legislative Director for Iowa Public Transit Association she was able to be part of meetings with legislators, through IPTA's lobbyist, meetings with Ames area legislators as well as through City of Ames discussions with legislators regarding city priorities.

Director Kyras then explained the two main federal legislative changes which could benefit CyRide through reauthorization of the transportation bill. This reauthorization is a once in a six year opportunity for CyRide to request significant bus and facility funding. First, CyRide staff has developed a legislative proposal requesting \$15 million to be conveyed to our congressional delegation. This includes bus replacement, hybrid vehicles, satellite building for bus storage and/or fueling station at existing site, as well as relocation/expansion of maintenance shop.

The second change reflects specific language changes in the new bill that would:

- Invest \$123 billion in public transit over the next six years.
- Support a new Clean Fuels Aging Bus Replacement Program where funding from a current Clean Fuels program would fund this new program for accelerated replacement of buses exceeding 125% of their useful life. Director Kyras explained that a significant portion of CyRide's fleet would meet this criteria and potentially allow for additional capital funding in the future.
- Create a new Mobility Program combining two current program into this one program reducing paperwork.
- Supporting new funding sources for the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Account which are going bankrupt.
- Support continuation of the Small Transit Intensive Cities Program and annual inflationary increases.
- Support the Congestion Pricing Program, but with new funding not existing levels of funding.
- Provide priority for public transit systems when fuel shortages occur.

Director Kyras asked the board if they have any questions or thoughts on the federal positions that could be beneficial for CyRide. There was further discussion about the Small Transit Intensive Cities Program and how much funding this provides for CyRide - about one-half of its federal funding.

The board then inquired about the request for congressionally-directed funding of \$15 million. Director Kyras detailed the construction activities that were included in this request and the bus replacement funding request. She indicated that she did not anticipate full funding and believed that an amount closer to the funding

provided in the last transportation bill for CyRide of \$2 million dollars was more likely. However, she indicated that it was best to explain CyRide's total needs to Senators Harkin and Grassley as well as Congressman Latham. Trustee Hayek suggested Congressman Bradley could also be helpful.

**QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT:** Director Kyras discussed some of the highlights for the first quarter.

- Ridership for the first quarter was 5.6% lower due to one less week of school in August and the fact that CyRide did not operate service to the State Fair.
- Expenses were 5.4% higher because of higher fuel prices.
- Driver's late to work continues to be higher this quarter.
- CyRide received more systems complaints due to a lack of service and construction delays.
- Accidents remain stable with a decrease in preventable accidents which is a positive trend with safety being a priority for CyRide.
- Transfers were higher because of an increase in cash fares that require a transfer slip.
- Dial-A-Ride ridership is lower.
- Moonlight Express ridership is lower because of one less week of school, but will increase for the next quarter.

#### **TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT - NOVEMBER 2008:**

Highlights from the report were:

- Bike rack usage is not as high as expected but the Director expects usage to increase in the spring, summer and fall as riders become familiar with the bike racks.
- Director Kyras was contacted by Houck Advertising with interest from a local advertiser, C & K Heating, to wrap an entire bus in advertising. Director Kyras was unable to reach Houck Advertising for more details on the advertising wrap. Director Kyras asked the transit board if there they were interested in discussing this proposal further. Some transit members felt the identity of CyRide would be lost, but asked her to bring information to the December board meeting if it was an attractive deal.

Trustee Madden arrived at 8:44 a.m.

- Director Kyras discussed the Ames-Des Moines corridor project and asked Steve Schainker and Warren Madden, who were present at the meeting discussing the potential for this service, if they had any additional comments. They indicated no interested parties from the Des Moines community were in attendance at the meeting. The discussion resulted in

a consensus that this service reflected a large commitment and the belief that there appeared to be little support. Director Kyras indicated that the result of the meeting to discuss this service was to study the need and potential with possible funding from the Iowa DOT. The study cost could be between \$60,000 and \$100,000 with local match required. Director Kyras asked board members if they would be interested in submitting a grant application to study the Ames – Des Moines corridor. Trustee Madden indicated that he would support the study, but felt that a vanpool/carpool option should be included in the study. This service development would discuss possible partnering with DART in Des Moines to connect the communities. Director Kyras indicated that the application could be brought to the transit board at the January meeting.

**SET TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:** Next transit board meeting will be held on December 18, at 4:00 p.m. and January 22, 2009 at 2:30 p.m.

**ADJOURN:** Meeting adjourned at 8:50 a.m.