

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

February 20, 2008

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met February 20, 2008, 9:00 a.m. at City Hall Conference Room 135. Vice President Ayers called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Trustees in attendance: Anders, Schainker, Madden and Holleman.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Anders made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 30, 2008 Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees meeting. Trustee Schainker seconded. (Motion carried unanimously).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments.

TWO MILLION MILE SAFE DRIVER AWARD – John Botten: Vice President Ayers presented John Botten with his Two Million Mile Safe Driver Award. John has driven for CyRide for the past 29 years without a preventable accident.

CITYWIDE FARE FREE ANALYSIS: Director Kyras explained that the fare free system for ISU students began in 2002-2003 and dramatically impacted ridership within the community. There have been discussions at the City Council level to extend the fare free system citywide.

Director Kyras told the transit board that through discussions with the Office of Energy Independence staff in January that she believed there was a possibility to fund the fare free project under this new grant source as the Power Fund guidelines closely matched the outcomes of the fare free project. Projects that were approved for funding could potentially receive 100% of the expenses for a three year period.

The CyRide staff researched other communities who have instituted fare free systems and found successes and failures. There are Fare Free Case Studies that provide objective examinations of fare free transit systems. Two of the main studies were discussed. Details of the findings and recommendations by each document were included in the transit board packet.

Changes suggested by other communities were to add mechanics; develop a marketing plan that addresses the target market and, the biggest hurdle that staff can foresee for Ames would be to find a way to control Dial-A-Ride expenses. Dial-A-Ride trips would be free as well as fixed-route trips, which in other communities, has dramatically increased the number of trips and cost for this service. This has the potential to increase CyRide's Dial-A-Ride service by 50%. There may be ways to help curb part of this increase, but a substantial increase can be expected.

CyRide could expect an increase of approximately 20% in fixed-route ridership which equates to approximately 1 million additional rides. The biggest impact on the fixed-route operations would occur during the morning ridership period. Four additional buses would be required to address anticipated overcrowding with a total daily increase of an additional 20 hours. A fifth bus would be needed to maintain reliable operations when buses were scheduled for maintenance. The impact on the schedule is unknown because CyRide drivers would not have to handle fares which would save time, but would have to handle additional passengers which could effect lengthen boarding times at bus stops.

The largest financial impact for CyRide would be for capital totaling \$650,000; total operating impact would be \$660,224; and, 1st year fare free project anticipated to cost \$1,310,224, 2nd year (4% increase) \$691,078, 3rd year (4% increase) \$686,161, 4th year (4% increase) \$713,608, and, 5th year (4% increase plus buses), \$1,500,778.

Financial savings that can be realized with the fare free transit system would include: a \$5,000 savings in printing of passes; additional state and federal formula funding of approximately \$68,000; and ISU annual Faculty/Staff pass savings of \$25,000. Non-financial savings would occur by the reduction of staff time in distributing passes (72 hrs/yr), staff development of design for passes (20 hrs/yr), and the biggest impact would be in the elimination of money-handling from the farebox and preparation of this revenue for the bank (624 hrs/yr.).

Director Kyras indicated that the last area analyzed was bus storage space with the purchase of five additional vehicles. She referred to the findings of the Transit Feasibility Study completed last spring which indicated that an additional four buses could be housed at the current facility. Due to the sale of buses and purchase of buses from Iowa City since the recommendation, it was determined that the net increase resulted in being one bus storage space short. Director Kyras explained that this space shortage could be accommodated on a short-term basis, but the facility study, to be completed by August 2008, would need to address the long-term impact.

Trustee Goodman arrived at 9:32am.

A lengthy discussion among board members on the following topics followed the background information presented to the transit board by Director Kyras.

- Consideration of the impact of ridership outside of the community at other transit systems who had eliminated fares
- Impact for providing transportation to public schools; will more students choose to take CyRide to school
- Yellow school buses would continue to be operated by the local provider, Central Iowa Transit.
- A positive impact could mean more service for passengers improving 20 minute headways to 15 minutes at certain times of the day
- The fare free project assumes existing levels of service and routes except where overcrowding would occur

The board discussed a variation on the fare free project by trying the no fare concept during the summer months of May, June, and July. Some board members were less comfortable with this smaller project due to the idea of offering fare free city wide service during the summer and then reverting to a fare system. It was felt to be confusing and sending the wrong message. Further discussion was held about whether the community was ready to financially support the fare free concept on a long-term basis.

Trustee Madden made a motion to refer the fare free concept to CyRide staff for further analysis and move forward with preparing the Power Fund pre-application for an April 1 submission with further discussion at the March 2008 board meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Anders. (Motion carried unanimously.)

FACILITIES STUDY CONSULTANT SELECTION: Director Kyras reviewed the background information presented when the transit board approved a Facilities Study in November 2007. This study will determine the space required for CyRide to operate an efficient operation with the anticipation of growth and a constrained facility site before additional dollars are invested into the current facility.

A Request for Quotes (RFQ) was solicited with bids due January 31, 2008. Bids were received from four firms: AMENT, Inc., Wendell Duchscherer Architects and Engineers, PB Americas, Inc. and ASK Studios/TranSystems. The Transit Director, Sheri Kyras, and Director for Fleet and Facilities, Rich Leners, evaluated the proposals recommending that the best choice for CyRide was PB Americas, Inc. The firm was evaluated on its technical capabilities and then the transit agency is required to negotiate with the top proposer for a cost to complete the study. If an agreement cannot be reached with the firm, then the transit agency moves onto the next firm.

Trustee Schainker made a motion to enter into a contract with the CyRide Staff's recommendation, PB Americas, Inc. Seconded by Trustee Madden. (Motion carried unanimously.)

BUS PURCHASE: Director Kyras reviewed the information from the September 2007 transit board meeting when the transit board approved the purchase of three new buses from Gillig Corporation. These buses have been ordered and are scheduled for delivery in late July or early August.

CyRide has received one additional 40 ft. bus and three mini buses under the state's discretionary bus earmark. CyRide staff is requesting approval from the transit board to add one additional 40 ft bus onto the previously ordered buses for a total of four buses. Delivery of all four vehicles would be in July or August.

Trustee Madden made a motion to award the purchase of one vehicle for \$335,000 to the Gillig Corporation to be included in a four bus purchase delivered in July or August of 2008. Trustee Anders seconded. (Motion carried unanimously.)

FURNITURE PURCHASE: Director Kyras reviewed with the board the final construction budget approved by the transit board in April 2007. One line item within this budget was for the purchase of furniture and equipment for the new building totaling \$126,150. CyRide staff is requesting approval from the transit board to enter into a contract with Pigott, Inc. for \$97,793.03 for office furniture.

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve expenditures of \$97,793.03 for the purchase of office furniture for the new CyRide building under the U.S. commodities Purchasing and Finance Agency and Other Government Agencies bid. Seconded by Trustee Goodman. (Motion carried unanimously.)

QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT: Director Kyras gave highlights and trends from the quarterly report. Ridership increased from an average of 27,000 rides per day last January to 30,000 for this January. The report indicates more lates for drivers and customer comments

were up. CyRide staff is working with employees to improve performance in these areas. The reduction in accidents in this fiscal year is a positive turnaround from last year.

Fixed route ridership continues to be strong; however, Dial-A-Ride ridership was lower than the first six months of last year which could be caused by weather-related factors this year. Moonlight Express ridership continues to increase.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

The following highlights discussion at the meeting.

- ▶ There have been construction change orders in the amount of \$7,224 since the January transit board meeting.
- ▶ CyRide Staff has not had the opportunity to review the changes from the FTA regarding the new charter regulations because of the research being completed for the City Wide Fare Free project.
- ▶ Ways to address the loss of Transit Intensive Cities funding will be presented at the March meeting.
- ▶ Date for Triennial Review is rescheduled for July 2008. Information from results of Triennial Review will be given to the transit board at the August meeting.
- ▶ An analysis of small transit communities found that, in Iowa, CyRide is carrying more passengers and receiving less funding than larger communities.

SET TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: Next transit board meeting is scheduled for March 26, 2008 at 9:00 a.m. scheduled to be held in Conference Room 135 at City Hall. The April 30, 2008 meeting was rescheduled to April 25 at 8:00 a.m. and will be held in the new CyRide Conference Room.

ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.