

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

February 26, 2009

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on February 26, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. in CyRide's conference room. The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by Vice President Popken. Trustees in attendance: Schainker, Madden, Munoz and Wilson. Absent: Trustee Anders.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Madden made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 29, 2009 Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees meeting. Motion seconded by Trustee Schainker. (Motion carried unanimously).

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments.

FEDERAL STIMULUS FUNDING: Director Kyras explained that final decisions by the Iowa DOT had been made on February 24th regarding which projects would be funded using federal Stimulus funding and that CyRide will receive funding for: repair to the Old Wash Bay, Seven Expansion buses, and replacement of bus #949. Five additional replacement buses that had been anticipated under this bill will not be funded. CyRide received approximately \$3.2 million dollars, a major portion of the funding for small urban transit systems.

It was further explained that due to the cost of the new 2010 emission standards plus add-on's such as cameras, bike racks and fare boxes, the total cost of each bus will be \$357,000 which is \$3,000 more than the Iowa DOT allowable price set for each bus. Therefore, CyRide will need to contribute \$21,000 in local dollars to equip these vehicles. Director Kyras told the Transit Board that CyRide was part of a national bus procurement administered by the Akron, Ohio transit system and awarded to Gillig Corporation. CyRide has 23 bus options remaining under this contract; however, the procurement of these vehicles must happen quickly with approval from the Transit Board and City Council as the bus manufacturers around the country will be inundated with bus orders due to the Stimulus funding. The price per bus under the Akron, Ohio bid is \$347,740.98 per bus with anticipated delivery in two years.

The design work for the Old Wash bay area of CyRide's building is all ready in progress under the On Call contract with Shive-Hattery which was previously approved by the Transit Board in November 2008 and, therefore, does not require any action at this meeting. Supplement No. 2 included in the board packet details the cost (\$29,500) to design this portion of the building. CyRide staff will be receiving bids for the construction and will ask for transit board approval at that time.

HYBRID BUS PURCHASE: Director Kyras brought the transit board up-to-date on the purchase of the two hybrid buses approved for funding under the Iowa Clean Air

Attainment Program. This project was originally planned to be brought to the Transit Board at the October 2009 meeting for purchase in the federal fiscal year 2010. However, CyRide received a telephone call from the IDOT that CyRide staff can move forward with the purchase of the two hybrid buses under the 2009 fiscal year. Purchase of these vehicles earlier will ensure a shorter delivery time as these vehicles will be able to be purchased before a majority of the Stimulus buses around the nation are purchased. There is also an estimated fuel savings of \$4,000 to \$8,000 per year dependant upon fuel prices and an improvement in air quality with fewer emissions from these vehicles. The grant application for these buses is linked to service expansion on the east side of Ames. The major disadvantage of purchasing these vehicles at this time is that a decision has not been made about service to the east side of Ames which makes it difficult to commit to vehicles for the service.

Director Kyras explained that the cost of the two hybrid buses would be \$1,144,000 and would be purchased under the Akron, Ohio bus bid along with the stimulus-funded buses.

Director Kyras explained that she felt that a case could be made that economics have changed since the application was submitted last summer, and an abbreviated route could be put in service or possibly requesting approval to place these two vehicles on existing service in Ames as service had increased due to significant ridership increases. Additionally, the NADC also has contacted Director Kyras asking for service to their facilities, however, no formal discussions have taken place to date. CyRide further explained the scaled-back version of the east side service and the possibility of grant funding for the service.

A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the benefits and challenges of committing to this purchase at this time. Transit board members discussed the fact that the new Lifestyle Center had not progressed as was originally planned. They then asked staff at what point, if any, could CyRide cancel the order. Rich Leners told the board that the purchase order can be cancelled up until the point that Gillig would begin purchasing parts for the buses, approximately 2 months prior to the delivery date which is anticipated in two years. This would give CyRide staff and the transit board time to address the operating budget issues next fall.

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve Alternative 1, as recommended by Director Kyras, to award the \$1,144,000 to Gillig Corporation for purchase of two hybrid buses funded under the Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program. Because the purchase of the hybrid buses under the Clean Air Attainment Program is coupled with new service to East Ames, the motion is subject to review by the transit board with the option to cancel buses before their production date if service to East Ames does not advance. Trustee Schainker seconded the motion. (Motion carried unanimously.)

AMES-DES MOINES FEASABILITY STUDY GRANT APPLICATION: Last fall, Trustees Madden, Schainker, as well as Director Kyras participated in a meeting at the Des Moines Metropolitan Planning Organization (DMMPO) to discuss the feasibility of service between Ames and Des Moines. The DMMPO requested further investigation to determine the level of interest for regular service between Ames and Des Moines with the group directing DART, CyRide and HIRTA to develop a grant application for submittal of state dollars to study the feasibility of this service. The application would request 100% funding.

Five specific tasks were identified which would be further developed through the consultant's scope of work.

- Identify the need/potential for ridership in fives along the Ames-Des Moines corridor.
- Analyze modes to serve forecasted ridership demand/select best mode alternative
- Refine best alternative
- Identify potential funding source
- Identify the benefits of service recommendation

Director Kyras explained that CyRide would administer the grant, if approved. She further explained that this would be an opportunity for a vanpool concept for Ames by an independent, third-party to be studied as part of this larger study advancing board priorities for this fiscal year. This study would provide CyRide with information on how a vanpool service could work, including how many trips might be generated and what fares could be charged.

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve submission by CyRide of a joint grant application, on behalf of CyRide, HIRTA, and Des Moines DART, to the State of Iowa for State Transit Assistance funding in the amount of \$100,000. Trustee Munoz seconded the motion. (Motion carried unanimously.)

FY2009/10 BUDGET REQUESTS – AMES CITY COUNCIL: Director Kyras informed transit board members that the City Council gave preliminary approval for the Summer Fare Free demonstration program to be implemented from May 15 – August 15, 2009. Council members also requested CyRide staff contact DMACC officials and discuss the possibility of DMACC helping to fund the evening service to the DMACC area. The Council will take final action on the Summer Fare Free Program at their March 3rd meeting.

Director Kyras shared with the board some initial thoughts about the promotion of the Summer Fare Free project such as interior and exterior ads on the buses, "How to Ride" video, promotion of Fare Free at businesses within the city. A detailed implementation plan will be presented to the Transit Board at the next board meeting.

Trustee Madden made a motion to adopt the Summer Fare Free Demonstration program, contingent upon City Council approval March 3, 2009, for operation from May 15 to August 15, 2009 for a total of \$93,200 paid by the City of Ames and for the CyRide staff to contact DMACC personnel with the prospect of funding the evening service and report back to the Transit Board by April 2009. Trustee Schinker seconded the motion. (Motion carried unanimously.)

OPERATIONS REPORT: Some of the highlights were: system-wide ridership is up 12.4% for the quarter, farebox revenue is higher by 10.8% for the second quarter and 13.8% higher for the first two quarters of the year.

In the maintenance area, major mechanical repairs increased 100% and are being addressed to determine if process improvements can be made in this area. The number of miles driven by CyRide is lower, -2.5% year-to-date.

In the fixed route, operations area, trends for driver's being late to work are declining; passenger comments are down; preventable accidents remained stable and an increase in transfers due to increased ridership.

Dial-A-Ride remains positive compared to the second quarter last year with ridership somewhat lower as well as miles operated. Expenses are lower due to fuel prices stabilizing.

Moonlight Express ridership is slightly higher for the quarter as well as miles driven and expenses which reflects carrying more riders.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT – FEBRUARY 2009:

Highlights from the report were:

Preparing material for the Recovery Act projects did not leave time for staff to bring together the three pieces of the Facilities Study that were needed so information could be presented to the transit board.

- Facility design on existing site without parking
- Five-year financial plan
- Estimate of additional operating cost to operate from two facilities

This information will be prepared for the next board meeting.

Airport Shuttle service for Thanksgiving and semester break experienced high ridership. Private operators' bids were substantially higher which left CyRide operating this service. Challenges with the service experienced this year with record ridership levels were: passengers made reservations at the last minute or arrived at the airport stop without reservations as well as passengers making

reservations, and not showing up. Additionally, CyRide experienced passengers arriving at different bus stops making it difficult for CyRide to know how many passengers would be boarding from a bus stop. Staff will be developing recommendations on fares, reservations and operational changes at the April Transit Board meeting.

SET TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: Next transit board meeting will be held March 30th at 7:00 a.m. in the CyRide Conference Room.

ADJOURN: Meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.