

## AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

September 23, 2010

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on September 23, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. at City Hall, Conference Room 135. President Anders called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m. Trustees in attendance were Anders, Schinker, Wacha, Choi and Pinegar. Absent: Madden.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Seeing no additions or corrections to the minutes from the September 14, 2010 meeting, Trustee Pinegar made a motion to adopt the September 14, 2010 as distributed. Trustee Wacha seconded the motion. Ayes: 5, Nays: 0. (Motion carried unanimously.)

Trustee Madden arrived at 5:05pm.

**PRESENTATION – FM GLOBAL INSURANCE COMPANY:** Director Kyras introduced Jeff Erickson, Engineering Specialist with FM Global, who is a representative from the City/CyRide's insurance company. Director Kyras indicated that Mr. Erickson's insight about CyRide's facility changes or relocation could provide the Transit Board with information to base future decisions regarding its facility expansion.

Mr. Erickson highlighted FM Global Insurance Company's background and history. He indicated that the company takes a different approach, as there are no actuaries in the company who figure out what should be insured and for how much. It uses an engineering method to prevent or minimize a loss. Mr. Erickson explained flood terms, 100-year and 500-year flood, and what each means.

Mr. Erickson indicated that new flood technology has improved and can be put in position to prevent flooding. Considering the flooding history of the Squaw Creek, CyRide could implement protection that could significantly reduce its impact in the future. According to the math and stats that have been compiled in the last few years, CyRide's facility is even or right on the edge of the 100-year flood level event. This does not mean that it is only going to happen once every 100 years, but that there is a 1% chance each year that it could experience some level of flooding. A 500-year flood has a .2% chance each year. What happened to CyRide in August was one foot above the 100-year predicted level. Since Mr. Erickson has been coming to the CyRide facility, there have been at least four flood challenges to the facility.

The question is what CyRide can do to prevent or minimize the flooding at the facility. He indicated that he understood that CyRide had looked at relocating the facility in the past and that those discussions recently have centered on expanding at the current site. He indicated that flood barriers could be placed around the facility to keep the water out with flood shields available for the openings, and that work needs to be completed on drains to prevent flooding through these systems. In the future, if CyRide were to construct any addition, the focus would need to be on providing the ability to keep water out of the building up to a foot and half above the 500-year flood year level. This would provide about 2 foot 6 inches over the 100-year flood. He indicated that CyRide was approximately 30 minutes from keeping the water out of the building when it began experiencing flooding, except for the drain leakage. He shared his opinion that the level

of flooding in the building would have been relative small if the exterior flooding could have been controlled. He indicated that there were options to keep floodwater out of the building if the decision were to expand the facility on the current site. His assessment of the materials and design of the existing building indicated that they would keep water out of the building, up to approximately 4 ft. He further explained not all building materials would keep flood water out, such as metal construction that would allow the water to buckle the sides and flood waters in. He indicated that aluminum panels can be clamped to door openings to prevent water, up to 4 ft., from coming into the building. He shared his thoughts that it is hoped that future flooding would only reach 2 ½ feet.

He indicated that if CyRide is looking at expanding the facility at the current site, the answer is “yes” it can be done as long as its built with similar construction and flood protection features that staff can put into place quickly. The most important element of future expansion is to design it so that flooding can be prevented. He shared his thoughts about the land to the south of CyRide. He indicated that he thought that it would be difficult to consider building on this site. Director Kyras asked if the area could be built up high enough for construction, could it be insured. Mr. Erickson said that if the type of fill used is stable enough so the water cannot undercut the fill, it is possible to do, but would most likely be very expensive.

If the decision is made to build on this land, the facility can be designed and constructed contingent on executing flood protection that can be placed quickly to keep water from entering the building. The water came up fast and went away fast, which is typical of small watersheds. Sand bags are not a good preventative because they take a lot of time, personnel, and must have the material on site. The flood barriers that CyRide currently has are not the most efficient technology or current generation. There are flood barriers available that can be put in place a lot faster. CyRide has a very good chance of doing this, but it comes down to planning and engineering up front. CyRide has the infrastructure that you can place this flood protection on and keep water from entering the facility. For example, looking at an expansion, CyRide can look at what is on the first level and what can be on the second level to minimize or eliminate loss. He shared with the Transit board that an example of how this had been accomplished at the current facility was the addition of a transformer/switch gear that was put on a platform so that it was above the water.

Mr. Erickson indicated a good approach would be to have a second line of defense into the administrative and maintenance areas. The windows are high enough on the building not to reach flood stage. The door openings, if the flood protection was in place, would allow individuals to step over it and not open the doors to let water into the building. If the drains would not have let water into the building, the administrative office would have stayed dry. He indicated that the office area was where a majority of the restoration would occur if a loss was experienced.

Trustee Madden asked what the insurance company would think about CyRide staying at its current location. Mr. Erickson indicated that CyRide should consider in its expansion planning where the predicted 500-year level would be located plus 2 feet above this. He stated that CyRide is pretty close to that 500-year level currently, as the exterior of the building is 4 ½ ft above the 100 year level. Director Kyras indicated she would invite

URS to the next transit board meeting to talk about the expansion study in light of this information.

Board members asked Mr. Erickson to comment about the insurability of the building. He indicated he could not comment on behalf of FM Global, but from an engineering specialist's standpoint, if preventative measures were taken, the building would be insurable. The most important aspect of the flooding is keeping the operation operating normally as they can when disasters like this take place. When the building is surrounded by water, buses have to operate.

**STATE OF IOWA CLEAN AIR ATTAINMENT PROGRAM (ICAAP) APPLICATION:**

Director Kyras told the transit board, this grant application is to help reduce congestion and improve air quality around the state. Transit projects that could be funded are operation of new routes, purchase of capital that support new services, construction of park & ride lots and outreach programs that inform the public about transit services.

The project CyRide has developed this year under this application is for dispatch and scheduling activities through the purchase and implementation of transit specific software. She indicated that CyRide provided 5,377,155 rides during the last fiscal year and CyRide's Scheduler, Tom Davenport, accomplishes this task using an Excel spreadsheet. The implementation of this software would lighten workloads and reduce errors. If approved, the ICAAP grant would provide 80% of the funding, approximately \$160,000, and CyRide would provide \$40,000 from its capital budget.

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve the submission of an Iowa Clean Air Attainment (ICAPP) grant application for \$160,000 in state funding for the procurement and installation of transit scheduling software. Trustee Pinegar seconded the motion.

Trustee Schainker inquired if there were ongoing expense such as maintenance cost for the scheduling program that should be considered with CyRide budgeting. Director Kyras indicated that there would be as with all software, but unsure of this cost until it was funded in a grant and bid.

President Anders called for the vote for the motion on the floor to approve the submission of this grant. Ayes: 6, Nays: 0. (Motion carried unanimously.)

**STATE INTERCITY BUS GRANT APPLICATION:** Director Kyras recapped staff's grant planning efforts shared with the Transit Board earlier this year. She indicated that as part of this plan, an Intercity Bus Grant had been identified as a possible way to fund the Intermodal Facility terminal and bus road. The grant will benefit intercity carriers. The cost to construct the terminal and bus road totals \$1.5 million dollars. The Intercity grant would request \$300,000 of this for these facility components.

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve the submission of a State Intercity Bus Program grant for \$300,000 for funding of the intercity and Executive Express uses within the Intermodal Facility. Trustee Wachua seconded the motion. (Ayes: 6, Nays: 0. (Motion carried unanimously.)

**NEXT BUS TECHNOLOGY DISCUSSION:** CyRide receives numerous requests each year to access CyRide information from customers, particularly students, smart phones. Director Kyras indicated that she had recently discovered that this technology had come down in price and seemed to be a possibility for Ames. This technology is particularly helpful for dispatchers as they can view where every bus is located in the system as well as its on-time status. The public will see where buses are located with real-time information.

The University of Iowa's bus system, Cambus, along with Coralville and Iowa City are completing a project with a vendor called, "NextBus" for this type of technology. Director Kyras demonstrated their system to the Transit Board members. She indicated that the estimated one-time cost for the system is \$193,000 with year 2 and beyond \$63,000 annually.

She indicated that one potential source of funding to procure a similar system could be the GSB Trust Fund, which is estimated to have a healthy balance of \$1 million dollars at the end of this fiscal year. She then shared a possible funding scenario with the board that relied on the GSB Trust Fund for 100% of the funding for the first three years of its operation, which was modeled after the Moonlight Express implementation initially funded by the students. She indicated that these concepts were presented to the GSB Fee Committee in July and would like to bring it back to the full GSB for further discussion. Director Kyras asked for direction from the Transit Board to determine if this should be pursued.

Trustee Schainker questioned the need and whether the priority should be on offering more services or routes to residents instead of this technology. Trustee Pinegar shared her thoughts that it was important to also keep the current customer happy as well.

Director Kyras mentioned students demand technology solutions and if CyRide is not able to keep up with this technology, the students will develop their own. She indicated that this was currently happening with the iPhone applications and that, in all cases, not all the information was accurate. She shared her preference to provide the technology solutions ensuring its accuracy.

Trustee Schainker encouraged CyRide to make sure the company would be able to support its product into the future and that the costs were thoroughly researched. President Anders asked if it was the consensus of the transit board to move forward with technology. The members indicated a desire to research it further and bring information back to a future transit board meeting.

**CYRIDE OFFICE BUILDING MODIFICATIONS:** Following the August flood, reconstruction of CyRide's office building began on September 13th. During discussions with the architect and construction firm, several modifications were suggested to improve the function and operation of the building after two years of experience with the current design. Director Kyras indicated that any modifications to the building could be funded with the existing federal building improvement grants (\$4.9 million) 80% share with the 20% local share previously accumulated in CyRide's Capital budget.

The modification list was provided. Director Kyras explained the purpose of each modification and indicated that the highlighted items staff had determined essential to

reducing ongoing operating costs or allowing the building to function more efficiently. These items totaled \$16,300. Other items on the list would result in positive changes.

- 1) Men's urinal – Continuing maintenance problem
- 2) Storage closet – Electrical to allow for future office
- 3) Dispatch floor - Replaced with concrete instead of wood as wood floor was buckling prior to the flood
- 4) Supervisor's Window and Door - Elimination of these for more privacy for personnel-related discussions
- 5) Men's Restroom Doors - Correction to the line of sight as well as enclosing gaps in stalls
- 6) Receptionist's Desk - Replace custom-built desk to modular furniture as original design had broken and was not large enough
- 7) Storage Room - Construct walls in old break room area to secure storage of materials
- 8) Breakroom Cabinetry - Add one cabinet below telephone in CyRide employee breakroom

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve the staff's recommendation for CyRide's office building reconstruction modifications using federal grant and local capital fund dollars: Trustee Schainker seconded the motion. Ayes: 6; Nays: 0. (Motion carried unanimously.)

**QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT (APRIL – JUNE 2010):** Director Kyras shared with the board members the trends in its statistics for the third quarter and last year. System-wide trends show farebox revenue was 88.6% higher in the third quarter without the fare free program and 11.6% higher for the year.

Administrative expenses were higher with the redesign cost of \$67,000 for the Intermodal Facility. With many CyRide promotions throughout the year, promotional expenses were higher, but will be reimbursed through a state marketing grant. Fixed route expenses were higher due to the harsh winter and the need for more buses to accommodate the number of passengers.

Moonlight Express expenses increased 21% because of an additional bus on Route A due to high ridership demand.

Fixed Route/Operations trends show a decrease in accident claims, slightly lower \$6,572 compared to \$7,188 in 2008/09.

Preventable accidents had increased, particularly within the facility due to the limited bus storage space, which causes buses to be close together and due to the need to back up buses.

**TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:** Director Kyras updated board members on the progress of the Intermodal Facility. She explained that she recently had had a call from the FTA that CyRide would be considered the grantee as opposed to the City of Ames, which is the "typical" grantee for CyRide grants. Trustee Schainker indicated that this change

may have an effect on the discussions currently taking place regarding the land lease and operating agreement for this facility.

The City of Ames, including CyRide, is developing a new website that will improve its ease of use for its customers.

A limited English plan is required by the FTA for community's to accommodate non-english speaking customers if their minority population exceeds 1,000 individuals or 5% of a city's total population, based on census data. The plan is currently be developed by staff and a key component of meeting this requirement will be the new website design, which will relay critical CyRide information in different languages.

Ridership at the end of August indicates higher ridership this year with the Gold route showing the highest increase. Compared to last year, ridership is expected to level off at a 3-4% increase.

Director Kyras shared with the transit board members that CyRide's fuel expenditures are currently higher than budgeted at \$2.35 per gallon.

The Director shared with the Transit Board members that the City Council is scheduled to have a joint meeting with the Ames School District on October 19 to discuss possible transportation coordination. She indicated that the Transit Board may want to be present for this discussion. Trustee Schainker indicated there is a possibility that this meeting will not take place. Trustee Schainker will inform Director Kyras as to the status of the meeting.

**TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:** October 21, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. A room will be secured in City Hall, if possible.

**ADJOURN:** Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

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Robert Anders, President

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Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary