

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

November 15, 2012

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on November 15, 2012 in the CyRide Conference room. President Anders called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with Trustees Anders, Madden, Schainker, and Wacha. Absent were Trustee Leines and Rediske.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Wacha made a motion to approve the October 15, 2012 and November 2, 2012, transit board minutes as presented. Trustee Madden seconded the motion. (Ayes: Four. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None. Public in attendance, Ames Tribune reporter, James Heggen.

President Anders moved to agenda item Aqua Route Modification - Summer 2013, until City of Ames Legal Department Assistant Attorney, Kristine Stone, arrived.

AQUA ROUTE MODIFICATION – SUMMER 2013: Director Kyras noted that this discussion was a continuation from last month's transit board meeting as part of the budget process to determine if board members wanted to include additional services in a budget option.

Director Kyras explained the first additional service option (Aqua Route) was one that the transit board suggested at the October meeting that CyRide staff provide additional information on for consideration. She further explained that the Aqua route began in 2010 and the challenges that riders were experiencing – long waits on the west end of the route to transfer buses.

Trustee Rediske joined the transit board meeting via conference call at 5:38pm.

Director Kyras explained that the route travels from City Hall to the Aquatic Center and then to Beyer Hall/State Gym. She indicated that transfers are timed well at City Hall, but cannot connect well with other routes once it arrives at Beyer Hall/State Gym. She indicated that customers would receive a better level of service if the route was from City Hall to the Aquatic Center only, as it could be operated at a 30-minute interval instead of the current 60-minute interval. There would not be any additional cost and would provide twice the number of trips. She indicated that some customers currently wait up to 30 minutes at Beyer Hall/State Gym depending on the person's travel. City Hall provides a better connection to all routes.

She explained that ridership numbers for the Aqua route show the first year at 3,100 passengers with last summer's ridership being the highest at 3,600 passengers. CyRide staff believes that a better service can be provided with the 30-minute service between City Hall and the Aquatic Center and asked that the transit board consider approving this route change.

Trustee Wacha asked since there is no additional cost if there a slight reduction in the number of trips. Director Kyras said it is twice the number of trips, only on part of the current route.

Trustee Schainker asked how the proposed changed affected the level of service to the passengers on the west side of the city. Director Kyras indicated that staff had looked at service from Steinbeck and Dickenson to the Aquatic Center under the current and proposed schedules and found varying levels of service – some trips were the same in travel time; others took a longer, but customers from the west will still have twice the number of trips to get to the Aquatic Center as they currently have. Most of the time it will benefit passengers traveling from/to the west side of town, but not in all circumstances.

Trustee Anders asked if there was a transfer cost and CyRide staff assured him there were none.

Trustee Madden asked if the closest stop from other routes was at Frederiksen Court. Tom Davenport responded that it was, but that the better option was to take another route to City Hall and then transfer to the Aqua Route.

Trustee Leines arrived at 5:43pm.

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve modifying the #8 Aqua Route to operate a 30-minute schedule between City Hall and the Aquatic Center effective May 25, 2013 and motion seconded by Trustee Wacha. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

MID-IOWA COMMUNITY ACTION MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING: Director Kyras summarized the MICA Memorandum of Understanding regarding transportation services. There have been a couple of iterations to the MOU with the newest version provided in the transit board packet. The MOU requests CyRide to provide three actions:

1. Operate general service transportation, which includes clients under the HIV/AIDS program,
2. Be available to answer questions from MICA case managers, and
3. Notify MICA if there is a fare increase.

Director Kyras indicated this is CyRide's normal procedure and offers these actions to any agency, but MICA needs this type of written agreement when they apply for grants.

Trustee Wacha motioned to approve the MICA Memorandum of Understanding and seconded by Trustee Madden. (Ayes: Five: Nays: None.) Motion carried.

2013-2014 BUDGET INFORMATION: Director Kyras acknowledged Tom Davenport developed CyRide's expenses and revenues for next year's budget and for the five-year pro forma requested by the transit board. This information was developed as a result of the

significant changes included in the new transportation bill, MAP-21, where CyRide would receive no capital funding and more operating dollars.

A revised five-year pro forma was distributed to the transit board as a result of information distributed at the Iowa Public Transit Association meeting the previous day. The revision included two changes affecting CyRide: FTA operating dollars are lower by approximately \$200,000 and 5339 formula funding of \$138,000 to \$154,000 per year through FY18 will no longer be available. In the Federal Register, a certain amount of money is allocated for the Ames Transit Agency; however, the Iowa DOT can make the decision whether they want to allocate it this way or distribute in some other way. Up until this new law was passed, the IDOT had always reallocated the dollars to Ames and other urban areas as it was reflected in the Federal Register. This year, allocated it under the PTMS process, where CyRide will not receive funding to purchase buses for several years. These two items dramatically changed the pro forma that was included in the transit board packet.

The pro forma's operating assumptions require ISU, City, and GSB funding of 5% for the first two years and increases after that to maintain existing service levels.

Director Kyras stated that the pro forma also assumes that there will be a capital transfer of \$800,000 each year to support basic capital needs for the building and the buses in FY16, 17, and 18. The ending balance is around 12% at the end of the 5-year period. She indicated that \$170,000 per year was included in building projects after the next building expansion project is completed in 2015, with an additional \$50,000 going towards bus shelters. It also includes two to three bus purchases each year from FY16 – 18, which would be funded from 100% local dollars. At the end of the 5 –Year period, CyRide would not be able to continue the shelter program as the dollars for this will have run out.

Director Kyras indicated that the revised pro forma represents a starting place for budget discussions so that specific options can be developed for the December transit board meeting and approved in January 2013.

The pro forma does not include service changes, which will be difficult to implement with high ridership. She further explained that October 2012 was the highest ridership month in CyRide's history, up 12% over last year's record ridership. Director Kyras explained that at peak times, there are up to five extras buses added to trips to meet the demand for one trip.

The Director provided the board with an update on the GSB Trust Fund level. Its balance, at the end of FY12-13, is estimated to be \$1,034,178 and, with no enrollment increases in the next year, the ending balance will be reduced to \$968,063. With stable to decreasing enrollment, the fund will be reduced to \$500,000 by the end of the 5-year period.

After an extensive discussion among the transit board members regarding potential financial challenges, Trustee Madden inquired if some of the private property managers

would fund bus service or if it could be a requirement. Historically, a couple of properties did pay for passes, but this did not continue after a year or two. Through the discussion, Director Kyras pointed out that the one piece of positive news was that CyRide's fleet age is much lower than it was five years ago, but to keep it at its current level, CyRide would need to replace 5 – 6 buses per year.

Trustee Schinker indicated that an increase in the property taxes would be challenging for the City to meet the 5% increase next year.

Trustee Madden indicated the university's increase will depend on the state's allocation and that the Governor will make his recommendations in January. He indicated that the university is budgeting lower increases in the area of 2.6%.

The transit board agreed on two options for the 2013-2014 budget: Option 1 with even local funding partner shares of 5%, and Option 2 of an increase of 2.6% from ISU and City of Ames, and the balance from GSB.

Trustee Anders acknowledged that the earmarks and grants that CyRide has received over the years has put it in a better position that it could have been in and that it should be thankful for this.

CyRide staff will develop the two options. Director Kyras indicated that to balance the five-year budget the first two years (2014 and 2015) are currently in grants and funded, and that staff will reduce the number of buses in the remaining if needed. CyRide currently has a 12% ending balance, but that could also be lowered to 10% to reduce the impact in the next couple of years.

TRANSIT ADVERTISING POLICY REVIEW: Director Kyras referenced the discussion from the October 2012 transit board meeting by explaining CyRide's existing advertising policy, which is contained in a contract that will expire in June of 2013. She explained that CyRide's current advertising contract is with Houck Advertising. She referred to the advertising controversy at Chapel Hill, NC and explained that CyRide's current policy would not preclude any type of advertising on the buses. The Director introduced Kristine Stone, Attorney in the City Attorney's office, who attended to explain the City's legal opinion on the proposed revision to the agency's advertising policy.

Kristine Stone told the transit board that buses are not considered public forums, but can be depending on current operations and designation. Without a policy revision, the agency does not have a lot of ability to restrict ads or respond to complaints. The advertising policies from six other transit agencies provided a good place to start. The DART and Chapel Hill transit agencies' advertising policy restrict alcohol and tobacco and she indicated that this is a good place to start.

The Assistant Attorney was concerned with CyRide's current policy in that it does not give the Director the ability to restrict advertising or respond to complaints and she believes that it is important to include this and have a process in place for appeal if denied. She indicate don the draft new policy some of its language could be clarified,

such as the section where it discusses advertisements that affect a transit system's image or operation. She indicated that this can be construed many different ways. She recommends more specific language, such as a broader categorical exclusion for political and religious ads.

Trustee Schainker said he was skeptical of banning advertising on the buses for tobacco and alcohol, and asked how the agency would make a decision on what could or could not be placed on the buses. He indicated that he felt it was a slippery slope. Director Kyras indicated that, in the new format, the Director would initially decide if the advertising was prohibited based on the policy. She indicated that she would want to review the actual advertisement to make the decision. She then indicated that the new policy stated that the Director's decision could then be appealed to the two permanent members of the Transit Board.

Trustee Anders asked if CyRide could place a disclaimer on ads stating that CyRide does not endorse the content of the ad. He indicated that he thought CyRide should have the choice as to what advertisement is placed on the bus.

Following a lengthy discussion, Director Kyras said, based on the discussion, that the City Attorney's office would modify the standard format for consideration at the December board meeting.

Trustee Madden clarified that CyRide must have some discretion if it believes it could be challenged. He indicated that he did not believe that there was anything legally wrong with CyRide's policy, but that it does not allow it to have ads taken down. He indicated that Section 4.02 of the proposed advertising policy refers to appeals to the Transit Trustees and he would like the Transit Board president to be included as well.

Trustee Madden made a motion to support the Director's recommendation to table the issue and bring it back to the December meeting with clarifications to policy Section 4.02 to include permanent trustees and president as well as further language clarification by the City Attorney's office. Trustee Wacha seconded the motion. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

NEXTBUS UPDATE & DEMONSTRATION: Director Kyras indicated that the Transit Board had previously inquired about how the NextBus vehicle tracking project was coming. As a result, staff developed a demonstration of the internal displays to share with board members. Director Kyras introduced Barbara Neal, CyRide Operation's Supervisor and Keith Wilbur, CyRide Dispatcher who had assisted Barb with the project. Barbara Neal and Keith Wilbur demonstrated the function of the program and what has been completed since approval of the project in March 2012: route configuration, schedule input, bus stop signage, computer equipment purchases, and system testing on AT & T version of the system.

The demonstration included the dispatcher screens, which indicate where buses are located and whether they are early or late, and the mobile dispatcher unit that can be used in buses as they are helping the system stay on schedule and assists customers.

Following the demonstration, transit board members were informed of the activities that still need to be completed such as the inclusion of NextBus on CyRide's website, bus stop sign implementation, and switching from AT & T to Verizon, when the Verizon modems become available to CyRide in December. Signage will need to be installed at 425 bus stops by CyRide staff once signs are printed and received. Tentatively, CyRide staff plans to go live in mid-February, if everything goes as anticipated.

Transit Board members asked if this information is available on any device such as a PDA and was impressed with the customer-side of the software yet to be completed for CyRide as demonstrated using the Chapel Hill transit system website. Trustee Madden asked if CyRide staff could demonstrate the NextBus software to the Government of the Student Body when ISU classes resume in January since the main drivers behind the NEXTbus project were students. Director Kyras will contact Jared Knight, GSB President to make arrangements where the students return in January. Barbara Neal clarified that a trip planner is not part of the NextBus project.

QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT: Ridership for July and August was 7.7% higher with September 6.6% lower resulting in stable ridership; however, October ridership changed the dynamics and CyRide reached an all time record ridership of 766,418, a 12.7% increase. Ridership is 5.7% higher year-to-date.

Dial-A-Ride ridership is lower and expenses are 8.5% lower. Trustee Anders asked if there were service issues with the decline in ridership. Director Kyras response was that there were initial challenges, but that the situation is looking better. CyRide staff will meet with HIRTA staff and discuss how things are going for both organizations as well as begin discussions on next year's contract.

TRANSIT DIRECTORS REPORT: Director Kyras provided report highlights:

- The overall financial impact of the hybrids on CyRide's budget indicates a 13% improvement in miles per gallon, which equates to CyRide saving \$32,000 in the 2011-2012 budget year and approximately \$37,000 estimated in the current budget year.
- The Intermodal Facility management office will be ready for the Safe Neighborhood Teams to move into just prior to Thanksgiving.
- Remaining Intermodal Facility construction funds are estimated to be \$222,000, which includes the sales tax refund.
- Director Kyras provided pictures of the new bus shelter completed at Dickensen and Mortenson the previous week. Surveys were distributed to passengers to gather their thoughts and opinion of the shelter.
- Transit Board members had previously asked CyRide staff to schedule a property insurance meeting to determine if additional insurance could be purchased for CyRide's older vehicles. The original meeting was cancelled, but will be rescheduled later.
- At the October transit board meeting, board members asked CyRide and URS staff to contact the manufacturer of the floodgates that are to be installed at CyRide's facility to determine if they can be raised and tested manually. Director Kyras provided photos of the floodgates at the Houston Medical Center and a question and answer sheet

provided by the manufacturer which showed that they can be raised manually. She indicated that CyRide staff felt comfortable with the product and believes it is a good solution for floodgates.

SET TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: December 10, at 5:15pm.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00pm

Robert Anders, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary