

**AMES, IOWA**

**April 23, 2014**

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on April 23, 2014 at 3:15 p.m. in the CyRide Conference room. President Rediske called the meeting to order at 3:47 p.m. Present: Trustees Murrell, Haila, Schainker, Rediske. Absent: Trustees Madden and Goodman.

Public in Attendance: Four Iowa State University Political Science Students.

**RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING BOARD MEMBER:** Director Kyras thanked President Rediske for his two years of service and valuable input representing the students. Trustee Schainker further acknowledged the transit board's appreciation of President Rediske's dedication, experience, and commitment to the transit board and taking the initiative to lead the organization through challenging issues. Trustee Schainker presented President Rediske with a small token of appreciation.

**DIAL-A-RIDE CUSTOMER MEETING AND SURVEY RESULTS UPDATE:** Director Kyras provided feedback from the Dial-A-Ride (DAR) public meeting held on April 10, 2014. This meeting was a request of the transit board at their February meeting for the purpose of gathering input, suggestions, and ways to improve the service. Additionally CyRide distributed its annual Dial-A-Ride survey and results of this survey were shared with board members as well. Director Kyras indicated that the discussion regarding these two activities would provide board members with information prior to their consideration of the annual renewal of the HIRTA three-year contract that will be considered at the May 21, 2014 Transit Board meeting.

As part of the discussion, Trustee Schainker referenced the City Council's request for a report regarding HIRTA service and customer comments as well. He indicated that CyRide and HIRTA staff could report to the Council at their May 13, 2014 meeting. He indicated that this report would include Dial-A-Ride and Asset-funded service provided by HIRTA.

Director Kyras shared results from the survey as follows: Of the 285 eligible Dial-A-Ride customers who received the survey, 44 surveys were returned, which is approximately a 15.4% return rate. This is the second year of HIRTA's operation of Dial-A-ride service so a comparison to last year's survey could be made as well as with the last year of Heartland Senior Services' operation of this service.

Some notable highlights from the survey were:

- An increase in service satisfaction from 64% – 73% in one year.
- Customers indicated that they were not satisfied with the reservation staff as there were long wait times to get a hold of a staff person on the phone. Director Kyras shared that HIRTA staff indicated that this issue was addressed by hiring

two additional reservation staff within the past few weeks and that the average hold time had been reduced from three minutes to less than one minute.

- Dissatisfaction with the amount of time to determine a person's eligibility for the program increased over the last year; however, the process had been unchanged. Staff will work to determine the reason for this increased dissatisfaction.

Director Kyras briefly explained the changes that HIRTA had provided to the Dial-A-Ride program this past year – meetings with drivers and staff, new phone system, additional staffing, etc.

Director Kyras then explained the discussion at the public meeting. Eight Dial-A-Ride customers attended the meeting as well as City Council member Gloria Betcher and Trustees Haila and Goodman. Director Kyras presented information via PowerPoint slides on the history, service statistics and program requirements. CyRide and HIRTA staff then welcomed customer comments.

Director Kyras shared that the comments received from the public meeting could be classified into five areas: general comments, eligibility, reservations/scheduling, trip denial and driver/bus/safety/other issues. She indicated that the reservation/scheduling classification had received the most comments at the meeting. She further stated that the total number of comments could be divided into concerns that either address the current ADA-required program or concerns that go beyond this program. The following categories were of major concern regarding the existing ADA program and provide an opportunity to improve service.

- The most common comment was related to the long wait times to make a reservation. HIRTA staff at the meeting shared that they had hired two additional staff to take reservations and that customers should see a dramatic decrease in the amount of wait time.
- Several customers shared that they had not received a call when their pick-up time had changed.
- The difference between Dial-A-Ride and HIRTA's other programs is confusing for customers and at least in the beginning to reservation staff.
- Several customers had indicated that they had been denied a trip.
- Several customers were concerned with how the trips were scheduled believing that they were too lengthy, trips were not timely because there was not enough time given or trips were too long.

Director Kyras then explained requests received at the public meeting that go beyond the federal ADA requirements.

- Will call trips are not timely. (ADA considers these same day trips and does not require that they be offered.)

- Customers would like to see more buses to provide the service – this would improve tight schedules, customer’s ability to receive their time requested, etc. (ADA requires trips to be provided within one hour of the time a customer requests.)
- Several customers indicated that they were not able to communicate well with the office/drivers after traditional office hours. (ADA requires that the office be staffed during traditional hours.)

Director Kyras recommended that the Transit Board of Trustees approve three improvements for the next year that address service that meets ADA requirements – require HIRTA to call customers when their time changes, continue education of reservation staff, further examine trip denial claims.

A member of the public, Jan Dreesman, then addressed the Transit Board by reading starting to read a letter expressing her concerns (letter is attached). She also shared her continued dissatisfaction that her 2:45 pm trip was changed and her belief that other customers are displeased with the HIRTA service.

Trustee Haila asked for clarification from Ms. Dreesman as to what customers she was referring to and requested that she provide the transit board with names. He further asked staff for the history regarding Ms. Dreesman’s 2:45 p.m. trip. Director Kyras explained that HIRTA had contacted Ms. Dreesman in November 2013 to let her know that they needed to move the time of her 2:45 pm trip to either 2:30 pm or 3:20 pm to make all trips timelier. Since that time, HIRTA and CyRide staff have had numerous conversations, meetings, etc. to try to find a solution; however, staff is unable to do so as only the 2:45 pm trip time will work for Ms. Dreesman. Director Kyras explained that a trip request at a specific time was an ineligible trip as the ADA allows transit system’s to provide the trip within one hour of the request in order to meet more trip requests. She indicated that Ms. Dreesman had been provided several alternatives and had indicated that these would not work for her.

Trustee Haila inquired as to whether discussions with Ms. Dressman’s employer had taken place to determine if everyone’s needs could be accommodated. Director Kyras shared that this suggestion had been made, but Ms. Dreesman had declined to have these conversations. Ms. Dreesman also shared that her work schedule would not allow for the 2:30 pm time and that it takes her until 2:45 pm to be ready to be picked up. Trustee Rediske shared that fixed-route customers have some of these same issues and that accommodating a transit schedule was required of all public transit riders.

Ms. Dreesman told the transit board she set her subscription trip up last August for 2:45 p.m. She was then told in December by a morning bus driver that her time was to be changed. Director Kyras indicated that this concern was addressed in the agenda item through the recommendation that HIRTA call every customer when the transit agency needs to make a time change. Ms. Dreesman shared that other customers, such

as Mary Kay Johnson and the Gurganuses, were also not happy with the service. Director Kyras shared that HIRTA had contacted the Gurganuses after the April 10<sup>th</sup> public meeting and they had indicated to them that they were satisfied with the service.

Trustee Murrell made a motion to direct staff to include the three staff recommended changes to the existing ADA-mandated Dial-A-Ride service. Motion seconded by Trustee Schainker. (Ayes: Four. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

**RATE SETTING RESOLUTION – FARES:** Director Kyras shared history of the last rate increase and the impact that this had, had on fare revenue since that time. In general, cash revenue had continued to decline over the last two years as it is less convenient to pay \$1.25 as opposed to the \$1 fare. Director Kyras recommended no change in fares.

Trustee Schainker made a motion to approve the 2014-2015 rates, which reflect no change from the 2013-2014 rate structure. Motion seconded by Trustee Murrell. (Ayes: four. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

**RATE SETTING RESOLUTION – PASSES:** Director Kyras shared that the recommendation for the 2014-2015 pass rate structure was for no change. She stated that fare and pass revenue has declined, with total revenue a little over two percent lower as Ames residents have elected to travel by other means.

Trustee Murrell made a motion to approve the 2014-2015 rates, which reflects no change from the 2013-2014 rate structure. Trustee Haila seconded the motion. (Ayes: four. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

**FY2015 STATE GRANT APPLICATION:** Director Kyras explained to the transit board that annually the board approves the state formula dollars allocated to CyRide and then requests funding for discretionary-funded projects. Shari Atwood then provided specifics on the FY2015 request.

Shari explained that the formula amount for FY2015 was \$604,598 and the Federal Section 5310 elderly and disabled funding, funneled through the State, was for \$191,260. The 5310 funding is for CyRide's ADA Service Contract with HIRTA and is included in the 2014-2015 operating budget.

Shari then explained the capital request for buses. She indicated that funding for these bus replacements was unlikely, but shared that including these vehicles in the application would allow CyRide to apply for any unanticipated funding that might become available during the year. She indicated this happened when the federal stimulus program was implemented. She indicated the total bus capital request was for \$2,985,200 and, if approved, the capital expenditure would need to be approved and budget amended by the Transit Board.

She shared that other capital items included in the applications were for associated bus stop improvements for \$40,000 and bus storage for \$800,000. Shari shared that the bus storage funding could be used for design and construction expenses.

She explained that the total state grant application request was for \$4,621,058.

Trustee Haila made a motion to approve the FY2015 State Grant Application subject to public hearing comments. Trustee Murrell seconded the motion. (Ayes: Four. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

**FFY2014 FEDERAL GRANT APPLICATION:** Director Kyras explained that each year, CyRide applied to the federal government for its share of the federal transit formula allocation to support operating and/or capital expenditures. Shari Atwood detailed CyRide's application information.

Ms. Atwood shared that the operating dollars of \$1,970,542 would support CyRide's budget beginning July 1, 2014 and that this dollar amount was \$11,718 more than budgeted. She indicated that this funding was secured through two programs – general formula program based on population and population density of Ames and the Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) funding for small transit systems that perform better than larger systems around the nation. Of the six STIC criteria, CyRide achieved five and received \$192,016 per criteria. She shared that it is difficult to meet all six criteria and that CyRide has never achieved the “passengers miles traveled per vehicle revenue hour” criteria due to the small service area CyRide serves.

Trustee Schainker made a motion to approve Alternative #1, to authorize the Transit Director to execute and file a Section 5307 grant application in the amount of \$1,970,542 to the Federal Transit Administration. Motion seconded by Trustee Haila. (Ayes: Four. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

**QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT:** Director Kyras shared the second quarter's operations report verbally at the last meeting, noting that there had been no changes to the final report.

Trustee Haila inquired about the total number of accidents in the quarterly report, which had increased. Trustee Haila shared his assumption that this was due to the currently tight facility configuration and assumes construction will not alleviate this problem. Director Kyras agreed that overall it is the facility configuration that contributes to this increase, but stated that staff will be looking at this to determine if there are additional procedures or policies that can be put in place to try to address this increase.

## **TRANSIT DIRECTORS REPORT:**

- Director Kyras said the Ames Chamber of Commerce will be going to Washington, DC in June and asked if the transit board would like to be included CyRide in their list of community priorities. Her recommendation was to include the national priority for STIC transit systems to increase the total dollars available in this program from 1.5% to 3.0% of the total transit dollars. The Trustees present did not oppose this request.

Trustee Schainker left at 4:45 pm.

- The Ames Transit Board approved \$125,000 for the purchase of five used buses in the fall of 2013. Additionally, in January of 2014, the transit board approved another five used buses to keep pace with CyRide's growth. As a result, Rich Leners, Assistant Director of Fleet and Facilities, purchased used 10 buses at approximately \$3,500 each from St. Paul, Minnesota. These buses will be transported to Fairbault, MN for painting and CyRide's Maintenance personnel will inspect the buses before any buses will be painted to determine if they will be parts buses or are street-worthy. Five of these buses will be prepared for service for the Fall 2014 term.
- During the week of VEISHEA, Moonlight Express service is typically very busy. With VEISHEA activities cancelled, the Ames Police felt it was beneficial for CyRide to still operate Moonlight Express to move people away from Campustown in the evening. Ridership was half of what it was last year.

Ms. Dreesman asked if she could finish reading her letter to the transit board. A lengthy discussion followed between Ms. Dreesman and the transit board members. Director Kyras thanked Ms. Dreesman for her comments and indicated that if she would like to leave her letter that it would be included in the meeting minutes. Ms. Dreesman will provide the letter to include with the April 23, 2014 transit board minutes.

Ms. Dressman then asked if the transit board would consider a 2-3 week demonstration project to add an additional bus to the Dial-A-Ride service. Director Kyras shared that both CyRide and HIRTA staff would need to address the fact that it would require an additional bus and driver so she indicated that most likely it would be next fall before this could be implemented, if desired. As a result, board members decided, by consensus as there was no quorum for a vote, that this topic should be included on the May transit board meeting agenda for consideration by the full transit board. Director Kyras shared that any permanent changes that go above and beyond ADA requirements (which this would) would need to be paid for with local dollars and that significant changes of this nature would need to be considered for the next contract, which would begin July 1, 2015.

**TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING:** May 21, 2014 at 3:15 p.m. in the CyRide Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40pm.

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Daniel Rediske, President

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Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary