

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

July 11, 2016

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on July 11, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. in the CyRide Conference room. President Haila called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. with Trustees Madden, Haila, and Gartin present at the meeting and Trustees Staudt and Valentino present via conference call. Absent: Schainker.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: No public comments.

2016-2017 OPERATION CONTRACT: Director Kyras explained that following a one-year contract with CIT Signature Transportation for service on the Cardinal route, a survey was completed in April of 2016, which rated customer satisfaction high for service quality. Based on the survey results and customer comments, the Transit Board directed staff to develop a Request for Proposal. CyRide received a single bid from CIT Signature Transportation for a cost of \$1,650 per day for two, eleven-hour pieces of work. She further explained that this daily cost was lower than CyRide's fully allocated cost rate per day of \$1,866 per day, but that the bid was higher than CyRide's direct cost of \$1,110 per day for this service.

Trustee Gartin asked if there were any themes in the customer comments. Director Kyras indicated two themes – wheelchair securement and one driver's safety. She indicated that both had or were being addressed by CIT. Trustee Gartin then inquired about the possibility of additional training for CIT drivers. Director Kyras indicated that Barb Neal, CyRide's Operations Supervisor, was assisting with this training and that they had put additional daily protocol in to improve their performance.

Trustee Gartin asked if there was a reason why the customer service survey was completed at the end of the year, as opposed to the beginning of the year. Director Kyras indicated it had been distributed to provide board input on whether to consider a second contract.

Trustee Madden shared his thoughts about his discomfort in contracting this service. He indicated that he believes CyRide can provide a better service and that this allows the bus service's image to be consistent. He did acknowledge that this was beneficial this next year as a temporary solution for CyRide's driver shortage.

Trustee Gartin was surprised that the CIT bid was lower than CyRide's fully allocated costs. Director Kyras shared her thoughts that CIT's bus and facility infrastructure is not as substantial as CyRide and, therefore, could be operated at a lower hourly cost.

Trustee Gartin asked if CyRide drivers were uncomfortable with this service practice. Barbara Neal, CyRide's Operations Supervisor, said that this type of service arrangement brings more challenges for the dispatchers in ensuring service is operated in the manner

CyRide would operate it; however, she indicated there was not a major concern from the drivers. She also shared her thoughts on CIT's hourly cost being lower than CyRide's fully allocated costs. She stated that it is more efficient to operate service for longer periods of the day and that CIT's schedule had been extended four additional hours this year.

Trustee Gartin asked how CyRide's facility challenges were addressed by contracting service. Director Kyras explained that the Transit Board members, two years ago, had desired to reduce the fleet size; thereby easing the fleet storage issues and reduce infrastructure costs. She indicated that contracting of service allows for a smaller fleet and facility needs, which was the initial reason for entertaining the concept of contracting service. She indicated that the more pressing needs today to contract service were as a result of CyRide's driver shortage.

President Haila mentioned one of the requirements under the Request For Proposal for contracted bus service was that all buses must be lift equipped. Further, he indicated that there had been several comments regarding the quality of CIT's bus seats. Trustee Madden asked if the CIT buses were transit buses and if the buses had cameras installed. Director Kyras stated that the contract required transit-style buses like CyRide buses but did not require cameras. The transit board asked if cameras would resolve some of the issues. CyRide's staff indicated that they would assist with investigations.

President Haila asked about who was responsible for insurance and liability of the Cardinal Route service operated by CIT. Director Kyras stated that the contract with CIT places responsibility on CIT. President Haila asked if the City had reviewed the insurance liability clauses. Director Kyras stated that it was reviewed and approved by the City's Risk Manager. President Haila inquired about whether CIT drivers could operate a CyRide bus. Director Kyras indicated she would need to look into that possibility, but offered that this could create more liability issues for CyRide.

Trustee Madden asked about CIT drivers compensation compared to CyRide. Director Kyras shared that CIT paid drivers more in wages, but she was not aware of their benefits package. Trustee Gartin shared his thoughts indicating he believes the idea of CIT employees driving CyRide buses was a good solution. Director Kyras will look into whether it is possible to lease CyRide buses to CIT in the next contract.

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve the contract with CIT Signature Transportation at \$1,866 per day for service as directed by CyRide for the 2016-2017 school year. Motion seconded by Trustee Gartin. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

SYSTEM REDESIGN STUDY – CONTRACT AWARD: Director Kyras updated board members on the contract negotiations between CyRide and Nelson/Nygaard regarding their services for the System Redesign Study. She indicated the last proposal price for their services

was \$186,632 and, through discussions regarding ridership counting methodology, staff was able to reduce this budget to \$158,858 without detrimentally impacting the study. She also indicated that the “Design Your Own System” methodology was included in the final price. She then explained that since this was higher than was originally budgeted, that she believes the fuel line item will be under budget again this year in light of current lower fuel prices and could offset this additional expense.

She explained the specific changes included:

- Counts will be completed on Monday and Wednesday only and extrapolated to Tuesday and Thursday, based on ridership by route and load counts.
- Saturday ridership count was added for the #3 Blue route to gain an understanding of the unique characteristics of this route on weekends.
- “Design Your Own System” activity was added. The Design your Own System is a public engagement tool to help the public gain an understanding in the balance between desired transit services and its cost implications.

Trustee Gartin asked for further clarification about what specifically the consultants would be counting. Director Kyras explained that CyRide currently counts riders by bus trip, but not by bus stop. The Consultants would be counting by bus stop to provide data needed to consider route changes. He shared his belief that there should be a way to automatically count riders as opposed to physically counting individuals. Director Kyras indicated that this technology is available, called Automatic Passenger Counter (APC’s), and that CyRide has been testing this technology on a few vehicles, but has not been able to get accurate data from these units to-date. She indicated that they are continuing to work on this. Trustee Gartin inquired about whether ISU’s engineering department could assist. He also indicated that he would like staff to prepare information on the APC technology and project for a future board meeting.

President Haila asked about the hiring process for this task and when the consultant was planning on conducting the count. Director Kyras indicated that they hire temporary employees and that it would take about two weeks to complete. She indicated that they were planning on starting this task the full week after Labor Day.

A question was raised by board members regarding how CyRide was able to determine where buses needed to be without stop-level data. Director Kyras indicated that field observation and trip-level data allowed staff to move buses to where they were needed. Barbara Neal, CyRide’s Operations Supervisor, provided additional detail about how the Operation’s staff monitors ridership on a daily basis. She indicated that APC’s will assist greatly if this technology is accurate.

Trustee Madden recommended changing two sections of the contract. First, Article 2 should reflect litigation jurisdiction in Iowa as opposed to California. Second, he questioned whether Article 9 allowed sufficient time to remedy a non-performance issue and suggested changing this from five to 30 days.

Director Kyras also indicated that Article 4 should be changed to reflect three attachments – RFP, final budget and Nelson/Nygaard’s original proposal. This would allow for federal requirements contained in these documents to be part of the contract.

Trustee Gartin questioned who owns the data that will be developed as part of this study and what the consultant is allowed to do with the data. Director Kyras indicated that there is a section in the contract that delineates this issue. She indicated that all data would be CyRide’s upon final payment under the contract.

Trustee Schainker arrived at 8:45 am.

President Haila asked about the final contract price, raising a concern that he wanted to make sure that it was a comprehensive analysis. Specifically, he indicated that he believed the number of hours included in the budget for developing recommendations was not sufficient and indicated he was willing to increase this if it meant a better product in the end. After further discussion, the board indicated that the Director should relay this concern to the consultant and ensure that adequate time was included in the budget to complete a successful study. There was a general discussion amongst board members regarding the consultant’s approach.

Trustee Schainker raised the question to the board and staff about what the purpose of the study was. Director Kyras indicated that the purpose, as designed in the RFP, was to determine if the current or a different route structure could provide the community the best service today and in the future with the growth CyRide has experienced from 4 to 7 million riders.

President Haila questioned whether there was a benefit to increasing the budget and shared a story of a person he knew that had discontinued using CyRide to the Research Park as it took approximately one hour from West Ames. His concern is how to better serve the entire community with realistic travel times.

Trustee Madden shared his thoughts about the impact development has had on CyRide services, indicating that it is difficult for a transit system to meet all community needs as growth occurs.

Director Kyras said CyRide can negotiate a change in scope if it appears that further analysis is needed.

President Haila questioned whether it was better to make a decision upfront on whether the budget should be increased or wait until further into the study. Director Kyras recommended waiting to see if additional resources were needed to comprehensively complete the analysis. She indicated that the consulting firm had the expertise in conducting these studies and felt their recommendation of time resources

would best serve the transit system. She indicated that this could be discussed at the initial meeting with the consultant if there was more concern in this area.

There was general discussion regarding the study's expectation from residents, development and areas where the study could focus – S. Duff development, ISU Research Park, E. 13th Street.

President Haila asked how the firm was obtaining non-rider input. Director Kyras explained the tasks the consultant had shared in their RFP and interview – public meetings, “Design Your Own System techniques”, pop-up events, and non-rider survey. President Haila shared his thoughts that he found the pop up events intriguing, as community inclusive.

Trustee Madden made a motion to approve a contract with Nelson/Nygaard of Seattle, Washington for \$158,858, with modifications suggested by transit board, to complete the CyRide System Redesign Study. Motion seconded by Trustee Gartin. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- Affordable Care Act (ACA) – Director Kyras explained that the ACA would have a significant impact on the large number of part-time employees at CyRide and that the city and CyRide staff were in the process of determining who would need to be offered health insurance. She indicated that preliminary estimates indicated that it could have as much as a \$100,000 unbudgeted impact to the current year's budget. She indicated that lower fuel costs could help lessen the impact, but that staff was also looking at ways to reduce expenses or increase revenue to offset this expense. She indicated that she anticipated being able to provide more information at the August board meeting.
- Driver Hiring Update - CyRide has a net increase of 15 people so far over the summer months. NextBus signage has helped with recruitment of drivers and there are a number of drivers taking advantage of the referral bonus. ISU's preferred class scheduling status could positively impact the spring semester.
- State Rodeo Competition - Director Kyras shared the results of CyRide driver's efforts at the state competition: Large Bus Division - Kevin Gries, 1st Place; Paul Klimesh, 2nd Place. Small Bus Division - Nathan Shimanek, 2nd Place, Gabe Wohlers, 5th Place. She indicated that this competition highlighted CyRide driver's strong skill set.
- Odyssey of the Mind - Ridership was impacted by the rainy weather during this event and ridership was lower. All costs for this event were fully allocated.
- Bus and Bus Facilities Grant Program - \$213 million dollars of funds are available and transit systems have requested \$1.647 billion with awards announced in August or September.
- Construction Bid - A bid for concrete replacement at CyRide's facility was above the \$50,000 budget and staff will postpone this work until next summer. President Haila suggested releasing the bid in January to receive the best price.

FALL SEMESTER MEETING TIMES AND PLACE:

- August 24, 2016, 8:00 AM
- August 31, 2016, 11:00AM Special Meeting
- September 30, 2016, 8:00AM
- October 26, 2016, 8:00 AM
- November 30, 2016, 8:00AM

Meeting Adjourned: Trustee Madden made at motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 am.
Motion seconded by Trustee Gartin. Motion carried.

John Haila, President

Shari Atwood, Recording Secretary