

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

August 24, 2016

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on August 24, 2016 at 8:00 a.m. in CyRide's Conference room. President Haila called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. with Trustees Madden, Schainker, Staudt, Haila and Valentino present. Trustee Gartin arrived at 8:03 a.m.

Katherine Gregory, Sr. Vice President for University Services, introduced herself to members of the Transit Board and CyRide staff and provided a history of her career before taking the position with Iowa State University. Katherine will be attending the Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees meeting over the course of the next year to gain a greater understanding of transit issues and then will be taking Mr. Madden's position when he completes this term in June 2017.

Each board member and CyRide staff introduced themselves and their responsibility or role on the board.

APPROVAL OF JULY 11, 2016 MINUTES: Trustee Madden made a motion to approve the July 11, 2016 minutes as presented. Trustee Gartin seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Anjana Avr and Pranamesh Chakraborty, employees at the ISU Research Park, urged the Transit Board to consider reopening the bus stops that were closed permanently at the Research Park's North and South Loop drives. They shared that this route change affected 25 - 30 staff and students working in the ISU Research Park that use the #6 Brown route. They recognized that students have cars, but indicated that they choose to ride CyRide. They further explained that the route change requires students to walk five to ten minutes to reach the nearest bus stop near the Social Security Administration building along University Blvd from the InTrans office in the Research Park. They indicated that this distance will be more difficult in winter weather and asked that the stops be reopened to benefit the students working in this area.

Anjana Avr and Pranamesh Chakraborty provided a petition signed by at least 20 students who requested these stops be reinstated, or at least one stop, be reopened and asked the transit board to be sensitive to their request. They further shared that they had been without these stops during the construction of the roundabout, but had expected it to be returned after construction.

Director Kyras shared that CyRide staff had had several conversations with personnel from the ISU Research Park before closing the stops in an effort to address the need for service to the new Hub building and, the currently being constructed, apartments along University Blvd. She further indicated that these discussions with the Research Park included a discussion that the Research Park would consider building a sidewalk

connecting the stop with the parking lot for quicker, easier access to the businesses along the North and South loop, if it was necessary.

Trustee Madden acknowledged that more students will be working in this area and that it has been a challenge to determine how to best serve the entire Research Park with limited resources.

Transit Board members acknowledged the individuals concerns, with Trustee Gartin making a motion to refer this issue to CyRide staff to develop a report regarding the issue and possible solutions. Trustee Valentino seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

JOB ACCESS REVERSE COMMUTE (JARC) CARRYOVER FUNDING – APPLICATION: Director Kyras explained that the Iowa DOT ,at a June meeting, shared that they would be accepting applications for leftover grant money (\$68,000) from the previous transportation bill for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program. These funds are for urban systems, with formal applications due October 1, 2016.

Projects CyRide has previously funded through JARC were: Brown route weeknight service extension, added summer service to the Brown route; Yellow route midday service; and Pink route midday service to the east side of town.

CyRide staff shared that previously funded projects would be eligible under the JARC program and would permit CyRide to pay for these services with federal dollars. It also would create a budget savings of \$68,000.

President Haila asked if the Brown route service near the Research Park would be eligible for this funding. Director Kyras indicated that it would, but that it would be easier for staff to submit an application for a previous project and that the savings could then be used by the Transit Board in any manner it desired. Trustee Schainker also reminded the board that this was one-time funding and any new projects would add to future budget expenses.

Trustee Gartin made a motion to approve submitting a grant application for \$68,000 to the Iowa DOT for Job Access Reverse Commute program funds for four existing CyRide services. Motion seconded by Trustee Schainker. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY REVISIONS: Director Kyras explained that staff had modified the redrafted policy brought to the Transit Board in May 2016. She indicated that additional changes clarified CyRide practices. She also indicated that staff had provided the policy document to the Iowa DOT's Drug and Alcohol Program Manager for compliance review. She shared that this is a standard FTA policy that CyRide staff modified to reflect CyRide practices. The current policy was approved in 2010. She indicated that the items

indicated in red were presented in May and the changes made since that time are reflected in blue. The policy provided represents the final version, with the following changes: legal name reflected, safety sensitive positions defined, testing facility change, modified language that referred to Assistant Director - Operations as CyRide's drug and alcohol program administrator and CyRide's zero tolerance policy.

Trustee Gartin asked for clarification regarding how the policy addresses an activity that is legal in another state, but would show up in a CyRide drug test. Director Kyras indicated it would be considered a positive drug test and further clarified that employees are provided this information at the beginning of their employment and that this is reinforced periodically with employees at meetings and through handouts provided on a quarterly basis regarding this program.

Director Kyras asked for approval of the new policy so that CyRide is in compliance with federal regulations.

Trustee Schainker made a motion to approve the staff-recommended changes in blue type noted in CyRide's revised Drug and Alcohol Testing policy. Motion seconded by Trustee Gartin. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT: Director Kyras briefly explained the detailed and summary reports regarding CyRide's fourth quarter performance measures. She pointed out positive results for the year, which involved measures regarding expenses due to lower fuel prices, ridership on Dial-A-Ride and Moonlight Express services and maintenance measures. Areas she highlighted for monitoring were accidents and complaints. Further, she indicated that ridership was 1.1% higher for the year; however, if the Odyssey of the Minds special event was not included, ridership was down slightly for the first time in over ten years.

President Haila inquired as to why ridership might be slightly lower for the year. Director Kyras said there are two factors she believes led to this trend - weather and development. Even with ISU enrollment up, weather had an impact on ridership as there were not as many inclement days making it more attractive to walk and bike to class. She also indicated that with the number of new apartments in camputown, which are walkable to campus, that fewer students from this area choose to ride CyRide. She further shared that even with this stable ridership trend, CyRide has just been recognized by the Federal Transit Administration for the highest transit system ridership in the State of Iowa.

Trustee Madden asked if Orange Route ridership had increased. Director Kyras indicated that it was also stable, but if the Orange/Gray/Plum routes were combined, that they indicated an increase. She indicated that these three routes together served the same area prior to development along S. 16th Street.

Trustee Gartin asked if steady to lower ridership was a positive trend for CyRide. Director Kyras said that after eight years of record ridership, that one year of steady ridership allowed staff to "catch up" with this growth.

Trustee Schainker shared his thoughts that he believes that more people were walking and that this is a positive trend for the community; however, he indicated he believes it is not a positive trend where more people are driving to the commuter lot when they could take a route closer to where they live.

Trustee Madden acknowledged that this ridership trend gives operations a break. He also shared that ISU's parking permit trend also has not increased, which means that more students are walking or riding bikes. Trustee Madden attributed this to more Campustown students walking.

Director Kyras indicated that while ridership was steady over the last fiscal year, the peak times were heavier requiring more buses on certain trips.

Director Kyras then indicated that the last quarter indicated a decrease in Dial-A-Ride ridership; however, ridership was higher for the fiscal year.

Trustee Madden inquired if Uber could be impacting Dial-A-Ride. Director Kyras indicated that she did not believe that this was the case as the Uber service was more expensive. President Haila added that CyRide customers had indicated some dissatisfaction in the past with these services. Director Kyras and President briefly explained how this service operated and was funded.

Director Kyras stated that accidents and preventable accidents for the year were higher and that staff had begun meeting to determine if there were opportunities to improve in this area. She shared that more accidents were occurring on CyRide's property as a result of the number of buses being stored and operated from the site and that accident costs were lower as many accidents were minor in nature.

Director Kyras shared that another area that is trending higher is the number of passenger comments. She indicated that more comments were being made about overcrowding and the need for more frequent service. She shared that when an overcrowding comment is made, staff looks at the per trip load counts and if they consistently exceed 65 riders, an additional bus is added.

Transit board members asked if the system redesign consultants would be reviewing the Quarterly Operations Report data. Director Kyras said the scope of work required them to review the productivity of each route and the peer analysis would help them understand how the system was performing overall. She indicated that they currently were working on preparing for the following week's meeting to establish goals and objectives for the study.

Trustee Gartin shared his thought that it should be easy for customers to comment about CyRide service and compared it to Uber where comments were provided through technology - apps. Director Kyras explained the numerous ways customers could comment about CyRide's service. Barb Neal, CyRide's Operations Supervisor indicated that CyRide took every comment seriously and if fault was found with the driver disciplinary action was taken. She indicated that a general rating of how service was operated could benefit CyRide without impacting the drivers work history.

Trustee Gartin indicated that CyRide should strive to improve and that students tended to be complacent and not provide feedback. He indicated that he would be concerned if we were receiving more complaints and remarked about the lower number of comments.

Trustee Madden shared his thoughts that there are two kinds of feedback - route improvements and driver concerns. He felt that there is value in the feedback on system or route issues as opposed to specific driver issues. He also cautioned board members that customers can get "over surveyed."

Director Kyras highlighted one additional trend regarding farebox revenue, which continues to trend lower. She indicated that in previous board discussions, this issue would be discussed along with the 2017-2018 budget process later in the year.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Director Kyras explained that this section of the meeting addresses items that do not need action, but that staff believes are important for board members to be aware of.

- PTIG Grant - CyRide was awarded a \$320,000 PTIG grant for the replacement of the roof on CyRide's original building. Specifications will need to be approved by the City Council as it is considered a public improvement and after the bid process is complete, staff will include this on an agenda for Transit Board then City Council approval in October. CyRide is trying to move quickly on this project to begin at the end of November or first part of December.
- Hiring update - As of August 8, 2016, there were 339 open hours that CyRide did not have drivers scheduled to work. These hours were addressed through overtime. In comparison, last year, CyRide had 750 open hours last fall and spring. Director Kyras indicated that she believes that the changes the Transit Board made last year were beneficial in achieving this lower level of open hours. She explained what these changes consisted of. She further explained that CyRide was shifting its focus from hiring/training during the summer to a school year focus. Director Kyras then explained the applicant pool, applicant evaluation and hiring, training statistics over the summer.

Trustee Madden asked about the quality of people being hired. Barbara Neal, shared that this was a challenge, but that CyRide had not lowered its quality standards.

Katherine Gregory asked what the typical driver retention rate was. Director Kyras indicated that non-student drivers were 8 - 9 years. Barb Neal indicated that student drivers were 18 months to 2 years.

- Articulated Buses - Director Kyras updated board members on the delivery of the four articulated buses. She indicated that three vehicles were currently on property and that the fourth one was to be received within the next week.
- Year-End Review - CyRide staff provided a Year End Review to drivers, which is included in the transit board packet, and represents a brief summary of the past fiscal year.
- CyRide Milestone - Director Kyras shared that on September 13, 2016 CyRide will have provided service to the community for 40 years. She shared the activities that were planned for employees and the public. Board members indicated that they desired to engage the public more and encourage staff to revisit their plan for this celebration. Suggestions included a formal event on campus, handing out birthday cake, proclamation at City Council, etc.
- Affordable Care Act - Director Kyras indicated that discussions were still continuing with City staff regarding the magnitude of the impact of this new requirement on CyRide. She indicated that she hoped to have an answer in the next several months, but that it could have as much as a \$100,000 unbudgeted impact.

FALL SEMESTER MEETING TIMES AND PLACE:

- 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 Gartin made at motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:47 am. Motion seconded by Trustee Schinker. Motion carried.

John Haila, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary