

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

April 25, 2017

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on April 25, 2017 at 8:00 a.m. in CyRide's Conference room. President Haila called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. with Trustees Gartin, Madden, Schainker, Staudt, Haila and Valentino present. Iowa State University Senior Vice President Kate Gregory was also present.

ANTICIPATED CLOSED SESSION REGARDING LABOR NEGOTIATIONS: Trustee Gartin asked Judy Parks, City of Ames Attorney, if CyRide had legal justification for going into closed session and Ms. Parks indicated that it did.

Trustee Gartin moved approval for a closed session pursuant to Section 20.17, Subsection 3, *Code of Iowa*, to discuss matters relating to labor negotiations. Trustee Staudt seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Moved by Trustee Gartin, seconded by Trustee Staudt, to return to Regular Session. Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion was declared to be unanimous.

The Regular Session meeting reconvened at 8:27 a.m.

Recognition of Outgoing Board Members & MPO Representation: President Haila acknowledged Trustees Staudt and Gartin whose terms expire May 15, 2017. President Haila thanked each of them for serving on the transit board, for their valuable insight, feedback, and experience and for the unique strengths each brought to the board.

Trustee Gartin shared that he will continue to support transit services and welcomed Chris Nelson who is the Mayor's next appointee, representing the City Council.

Approval of March 28, 2017 Minutes: President Haila addressed three corrections to the minutes, First, regarding the ACA Document Delay, page 4, President Haila requested a change to state, "President Haila asked if CyRide remains in compliance until this is accomplished and Director Kyras confirmed.

Second, a correction to the Gold route on page 8, to read "no neighborhood streets would be impacted by the Gold route." Board members discussed this correction and agreed that the intent at the March meeting was to "lessen" the impact, but not to ensure that there was no impact.

Third, on page 11, third paragraph from the bottom, President Haila states that the minutes should read "President Haila asked for confirmation that the System Redesign plan would begin to be implemented in the fall of 2018 and asked if the zone service was not successful; if it could be modified in May of 2019."

Trustee Gartin moved to adopt the amended March 28, 2017 transit board minutes. Trustee Valentino seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Public Comments: No public comments.

CYRIDE PAVING PROJECT BIDS/AWARD: Director Kyras briefly described the paving project, indicating that it would address concrete on the east side of the facility, that it was bid last year and that bids came in over budget and that this maintenance project was, therefore, deferred to this year. She indicated that CyRide received four bids for the replacement of approximately 5,000 square feet of concrete, with JAS Construction LLC, of Altoona, IA submitting the lowest base bid at \$58,491. With the favorable low bid (budget was \$99,565), CyRide would have sufficient funding to add the bid alternate of a new LED light and pole for \$4,400. Therefore, the total project cost would be \$62,891.

Trustee Gartin was concerned with the wide bid price variance and asked if there had been further discussion with the firms to ensure that all firms were bidding under the same assumptions. Trustee Madden shared his experience with concrete bids, indicating that there can be a large discrepancy between pricing and supported Trustee Gartin's direction to gain more clarity on this issue. Rich Leners, Asst. Director of Fleet and Facilities shared with the board that the bids were examined by CyRide's Architect and the City of Ames Purchasing Department and both indicated a comfortable level with the low bid. He further shared that JAS Construction had recently received work at Iowa State, and that the timing of their project would coincide with CyRide's allowing for efficiencies, which attributed to their lower bid price.

President Haila requested greater clarity on the area to be replaced. Director Kyras referred board members to the drawing on page 3 of the board's meeting material. Rich Leners provided detailed information regarding which sections would be replaced and the phasing of the project.

Trustee Gartin made a motion to approve Alternative #1 to award CyRide's 2017 paving construction project to JAS Construction, LLC for \$62,891. Motion was seconded by Trustee Staudt. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

STATE GRANT & PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT (PTIG) GRANT APPLICATION: Director Kyras presented the annual state grant application, which is submitted to the Iowa Department of Transportation (Iowa DOT) to fund CyRide's operating and capital needs. She briefly highlighted changes from the previous year's application, indicating that the formula operating request was estimated to be approximately \$40,000 higher than was reflected in the 2017-2018 budget.

Shari Atwood, CyRide's Transit Planner, indicated that the new Public Transit Infrastructure Grant project this year was for replacement of the maintenance hoists. She also indicated that the eight buses contained in the grant will only be funded if unforeseen funding is secured, such as federal stimulus dollars in past years.

Trustee Madden notice that CyRide was applying for approximately 5.5% of the state formula dollars and asked how this was determined. Director Kyras indicated that it was based on a state formula and was CyRide's share of the large urban system funding, indicating that Des Moines' share was approximately 8% and the three Iowa City systems averaged around 10% combined.

Trustee Valentino made a motion to approve the FY2018 State Grant. Trustee Staudt seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Surface Transportation Program Funding Request: Director Kyras provided board members with a brief summary of the federal Surface Transportation Program and Ames Area MPO's share of this funding totaling \$1.4 million dollars annually. She also stated that the MPO had awarded \$225,000 last year to CyRide for the 2019-2020 year for the purchase of buses. She indicated that the MPO was currently requesting projects for the 2020-2021 year and indicated that CyRide could again request \$225,000 for the purchase of buses in this year.

Trustee Madden stated that this funding allows CyRide to purchase new buses and funds CyRide's bus replacement needs in the later years of CyRide's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Trustee Madden made a motion to make a grant request of \$225,000 in bus capital funds from the Ames Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in STP federal funds for the 2020-2021 year. Trustee Gartin seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Annual Dial-A-Ride Results, Contract Renewal and Performance Measures: Director Kyras explained that CyRide's contract with HIRTA for Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service expires on June 30, 2018 and that CyRide has one more year on this contract; however, annually that board considers whether to continue with the contract for the next year. She then explained the purpose of the contractual relationship – funding for the DAR service could not available to CyRide if it directly operated this service, lower number of drivers needed.

The Director then summarized the results of the survey distributed to each DAR customer. She indicated that a lower return rate was achieved this year with 22 surveys completed for a 16.7% return rate. Results shared with the transit board included:

- Overall increased satisfaction with the service, from 65.3% in 2016 to 66% for 2017. However, the very satisfied category was lower this past year, declining by 13.4%.
- Customers are generally more satisfied with reservations and with how the call-taking system was working.
- The survey this year generated more comments on professionalism on how the HIRTA employees were responding and driver conflicts. This was

attributed to new office staff and an emphasis for the drivers to collect the appropriate fare.

- Greater satisfaction with the condition of the buses and safety issues.

The Director then explained that the transit board had approved six performance measures for this contract and all but one had been met or exceeded in 2015-2016. The measure not achieved was the "Passenger Rides Before/After Pickup Window." She explained that discussions with HIRTA regarding how to improve this measure centered on better utilization of the supervisor's van that CyRide had purchased for HIRTA to help keep its service on time. The Director shared that overall CyRide staff believes that HIRTA is providing a quality and efficiency service to DAR customers.

Director Kyras indicated that HIRTA was interested in completing the last year of the contract and that the cost increase for the 2017-2018 year would be 2%. This increase is within industry standards and a lower rate than CyRide could operate the service.

Trustee Gartin suggested that CyRide staff reach out to human service agencies next year and also get their opinion on how the DAR service is operating for their clients. Director Kyras indicated that DAR service, as mandated by the federal government, was based on individuals and not agencies and to separate the DAR service from HIRTA service would be difficult for the agencies to provide input on. Trustee Gartin reiterated that listening to stakeholders was important and created good data points to determine service quality.

Trustee Gartin encouraged Director Kyras to develop a report for the City Council regarding the DAR survey and performance measure results, so that they can be apprised of the information as well.

Trustee Madden expressed his concern with the lower response rate and inquired about whether there was a different approach that could generate more input, such as having someone ride the bus and help customers fill out the survey. Director Kyras indicated that this was a topic of discussion at the CyRide-HIRTA meeting recently and this is one approach that was being discussed. Trustee Gartin suggested speaking with Susan Gwiasda, Public Relations Officer for the City of Ames, regarding survey method to collect meaningful data.

Trustee Schainker made a motion to approve continuing a contract with Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) for the 2017-2018 budget year at a 2% increase. Motion seconded by Trustee Gartin. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Cardinal Route Survey/Contract: Director Kyras provided background on its contracting arrangement on CyRide's Cardinal Route, indicating that CIT Transportation had provided this service for the last two years and that this allowed for two fewer CyRide buses and drivers. She indicated that the CIT contract will expire on June 30, 2017.

Additionally, Durham provides four to six trips in the morning on this route to address overcrowding issues.

CyRide staff distributed a survey to determine customer satisfaction with the two contractors, as well as CyRide's service on the route. Also, staff observations, comments received by customers during the year and a comparison to CyRide costs to provide the service were completed to determine if contracting relationships should continue. She shared the following survey results:

- All services operating the Cardinal route rated at least a 4 on a scale of 5 being most satisfied.
- The overall rating for CIT is higher than last year.
- 98% of respondents indicated they would recommend the service to a friend and rated service good to excellent.

Staff observations were mainly positive; however, there were a few incidents that had generated a discussion with CIT to correct – wheelchair lift operations, safety issues and listening to CyRide's radio for communications. She indicated that the issues were corrected.

She also briefly discussed the customer comments received year-to-date with smooth braking being the most common and pedestrian awareness another.

Director Kyras then shared the cost of CIT's service for the current year, \$1,650 dollars a day, which is equivalent to \$78.57 per hour, compared to CyRide's cost at \$85 per hour.

Director Kyras indicated overall satisfaction with the contract service with CIT and indicated that staff recommended a two-year contract, which would allow for the System Redesign project to be implemented prior to reconsideration of this service.

Trustee Schinker asked if it was possible to secure the services under a single source procurement, as opposed to a Request For Proposal, as only one bid from the same company had been received in the past. Director Kyras indicated that she could look into this possibility.

Trustee Madden asked if CyRide would need to continue contracting its services after the System Redesign implementation was completed. Director Kyras indicated that after implementing the service changes, CyRide could revisit this service arrangement and determine if it was advantageous at that time. She indicated that contracting service is more challenging, but that it reduces CyRide's driver requirement and fleet size.

ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory suggested contracting with a private provider for a two or three year period until CyRide's fleet is adequate to meet demand and the facility needs are addressed.

Director Kyras indicated that longer-term contract pricing is more challenging to predict fuel prices and accurately reflect this in a contract. She also shared with board members that CyRide's current contractor, if chosen, had indicated that with a longer-term contract they would be willing to purchase newer, refurbished vehicles to operate the Cardinal Route service.

Trustee Schainker made a motion to direct staff to prepare a new Request For Proposal to received bids on service contracting on the Cardinal Route for the two years, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 school year, with three one-year options and a non-appropriation clause, for consideration at the June Transit Board meeting. Trustee Gartin seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Transit Director's Report:

- **2016-2017 Ridership Update** - Ridership numbers are anticipated to be lower for the first time since 2005, as the school year will be approximately 1% lower and there will be no Odyssey of the Mind event this summer, which added more than 80,000 rides to CyRide's annual numbers. She indicated that she believes that CyRide is entering a stable ridership period, after experiencing a significant growth period for the last ten years. She indicated that CyRide's staff and board members will need to modify its service philosophy to ensure that CyRide remains efficient and effective. Resources will need to be moved around, as opposed to adding resources as has happened during CyRide's growth period. ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory provided information regarding enrollment, indicating that ISU residence housing demand was lighter this year and, as a result, would be terminating its leases in West Ames for apartments.

Trustee Staudt left at 9:18am.

Trustee Gartin shared his thoughts that with ridership stabilizing, there is an incentive to reach out to the community to increase ridership from this untapped non-student potential.

Director Kyras explained the ridership graphs contained in the Director's Report. One highlight noted was that CyRide's Red route has continued to gain riders and is close to Orange route ridership levels.

ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory asked if Ames is comparable to non-university transit systems in its rides per capita. Director Kyras indicated that CyRide was unique in this area as its system carries approximately the same number of rides per capita as much larger cities, such as Boston and Washington DC. Ms. Gregory indicated that she believes that the key to increased community ridership is to get the community to view this service differently - fun to ride.

Director Kyras shared that CyRide does not market its services to the community as it has not needed to during this growth period and additional growth would have been more challenging. She indicated that this could be accomplished by reaching out to the employment sector and creating marketing materials, but that this would most likely require additional staff to accomplish.

Trustee Gartin asked board members and staff if a 1% decline in ridership created a positive situation for CyRide. ISU Senior Vice President Kate Gregory shared that she believes a 1% change is not significant. Director Kyras indicated that a slowing of the growth was positive from CyRide's staff perspective as it provided an opportunity to modify its infrastructure to match new demands.

Trustee Gartin said that he believes there is a balance or level that allows CyRide to be efficient. Director Kyras indicated that with stable growth it is more difficult to maintain existing efficiency, as it takes the same resources/costs to operate a bus trip for 50 riders as it does for 70.

Trustee Madden shared that when enrollment declines, less revenue for CyRide is generated through student fees, so this will make the financial side of CyRide more difficult.

President Haila asked if a ridership decline would affect CyRide's state formula funding share, which is currently approximately 5.5%. Director Kyras indicated that it is one of the factors that is used to calculate CyRide's share of state funding, but she did not believe it would have a large impact. She also indicated that it would have no impact on the federal formula funding and most likely would have no impact on its Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) funding. She shared the largest challenge would be with the local funding – student fees revenues.

Trustee Valentino shared that students are becoming more sensitive to the student fee rates. Director Kyras indicated that students should see benefits when the System Redesign is implemented. He then shared a concern raised by the Greek community with the System Redesign Plan, which will eliminate service on Ash Ave.

- **System Redesign Next Steps** –Director Kyras shared the plans for information that would be provided at the April board meeting regarding the System Redesign Plan. A concern was raised about congestion on Union Dr. Director Kyras shared that the consultant team has been given a standard that no more than three buses, in either direction, can be operating on Union Drive near Friley at one time.

President Haila asked if there was an alternate plan if it was not possible to modify the Blue route near Target/Walmart. Director Kyras indicated that CyRide would continue using its current routing if this change was not possible.

Trustee Madden asked about whether there had been further discussions with the new management at North Grand Mall. Director Kyras indicated that a meeting was held and that the mall had requested that CyRide examine moving its stop to the back side of the mall, instead of the front. She indicated that this would add time, that is not available in the schedules of the four bus routes operating to this location, which would require additional buses be added to each route to maintain existing/proposed service levels. She indicated that staff would be examining this request and providing cost information to the mall, as well as to the board at future meetings.

Director Kyras indicated that recent discussions with the consultant were to phase in the changes, beginning as early as May 2018 with community route changes, with the remainder of the changes to occur in the Fall 2018. She also indicated that discussions about how to fund the bus turnaround at the Wallace/Wilson complex would most likely need to occur over the summer, so that plans could be developed in the fall, bid in the spring, for construction in summer 2018.

President Haila asked if additional public outreach would need to occur. Director Kyras indicated that it would, as required by the federal government when a route changes more than 10%. She anticipates this outreach in the fall 2017 so services can be included in the budget in November/December 2017. President Haila indicated his desire that these public meetings should be positively presented, indicating exciting changes for the community with more consistency in the schedules and greater efficiencies.

Director Kyras said the May 24, 2017 transit board meeting would focus on the System Redesign's refinement - making sure that the changes can be implemented after preliminary schedules are developed.

Transit board members discussed different opportunities for conveying the plan's service changes and timing on when to educate the public. Trustee Schinker indicated that the Innovative Transit Service would need to be branded and presented as a positive change.

Set Meeting Times and Place:

- May 24, 2017, 8:30 AM
- June 28, 2017, 8:00 AM
- August 24, 2017, 8:00 AM

Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 9:38 a.m.

John Haila, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary