

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

March 19, 2018

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on March 19, 2018 at 5:15 P.M. in the CyRide Conference room. President Valentino called the meeting to order at 5:20 P.M. with Trustees Valentino, Bibiloni, Cain, Jeffrey, and Nelson. Absent: Trustee Schainker.

Guests in Attendance: Peter Hallock, City of Ames resident and Lauris Olson, Story County Supervisor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Trustee Jeffrey made a motion to approve the February 15, 2018 minutes as presented. Trustee Bibiloni seconded the motion. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.)

Trustee Schainker arrived at 5:25 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Director Kyras indicated that staff had begun receiving public comments on its CyRide 2.0 service changes and would be gathering these comments for inclusion in the April board meeting materials.

QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT: President Valentino moved to agenda item #7 while preparations were being completed for the electric bus presentation. Director Kyras provided the following highlights regarding CyRide's performance for the second quarter of the year - October through December 2017.

- The ridership decline CyRide has been experiencing was significantly less for the second quarter, with fixed route ridership declining -0.4%, Moonlight Express service by -28.7% and Dial-Ride ridership increased more than 11%.
- With the decline in ridership, system-wide efficiency also declines.
- The average number of drivers CyRide is able to employ continues to be a challenge with driver employment levels being more than 9% less than one year ago. Director Kyras explained that increasing the lowest driver wage as of July 1st should help gain interest in the position.
- The total number of accidents has increased; however, the number of accidents that drivers could have prevented is lower. Director Kyras indicated that a large number of accidents have occurred where a passenger vehicle has collided with the back of the bus.
- Customer's comments have increased slightly with passengers requesting more service and commenting about driver performance.
- Farebox revenue had been trending upward; however, this revenue source declined in the second quarter, -15.3%.
- CyRide has experienced an increase in the number of road calls, but upon analysis there is not one specific factor that contributed to this increase. Staff will continue to monitor this maintenance issue.

- Varying staff levels have led to a smaller number of bus interiors being able to be cleaned in the second quarter; however, year-to-date, more have been cleaned.

PROTERRA ELECTRIC BUS ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION: Director Kyras introduced Lauren Cochran, Regional Sales Manager with Proterra, who presented, via web-based technology, an analysis of the impact of operating electric buses at CyRide. Ms. Cochran indicated that a second, more detailed analysis would be presented at the April board meeting.

She briefly provided board members with background information regarding Proterra and its deployment of electric buses around the nation. She then provided the board with an analysis of the total cost of operating (TCO) an electric bus, based on CyRide's route specific data. In summary she indicated that:

- Over the 18-yr. life of a CyRide bus, the operating cost for 20 buses could be half of its diesel or hybrid counterpart – savings of \$6 to \$7 million dollars.
- Over the 18-yr. life of a CyRide bus, the emissions for 20 buses could be zero as compared to over 70-90 million pounds for its diesel or hybrid counterpart.
- Cost of an electric bus is approximately \$829,000 plus a \$65,000 in-depot charger, compared to a diesel bus at approximately \$450,000.
- Fuel savings over the 18-yr. life of a CyRide bus would be \$146,336 for a diesel bus and \$103,867 for a hybrid bus.
- Payback for the higher cost of an electric bus is a little less than 5 years due to the fuel savings and lower maintenance costs.

She indicated that this analysis was based upon their longest mile bus – E2 Max. - indicating that this style bus could operate approximately 200-250 miles on one, four-hour charge. Director Kyras shared that she had asked Ms. Cochran to provide costs on the bus with the longest miles per charge as this style bus would be able to operate on every CyRide route. Ms. Cochran also shared that the maintenance costs on electric buses are much lower due to fewer parts and no oil changes. She also indicated that the body of the bus was made up of a composite material, which allowed for quicker accident repairs.

Ms. Cochran then shared options for the purchase or lease of batteries for the buses, indicating that some transit systems chose to lease the batteries and pay for the lease through reduced maintenance/fuel costs. She then briefly discussed funding options, such as the Federal Transit Administration's LoNo bus replacement program, which allows for the competitive bidding of buses through the grant process.

Trustee Schainker asked about the cost and process to repair the composite body when a bus was in an accident. Ms. Cochran explained that the bus is assembled in pieces and

the piece with the damage is taken off and replaced, allowing for much less downtime of the bus. She also explained that there is very little damage in a low-impact accident with the composite material, which is similar to the material used for wind turbine blades.

Trustee Jeffries asked about Proterra's maintenance training program for the electric buses. Ms. Cochran indicated that they had an extensive training program, which included videos and manuals. She indicated that at first mechanics tend to be skeptical, but quickly become accustomed to the differences in an electric bus and in the end believe they are easier to maintain.

Trustee Bibiloni asked for Ms. Cochran to explain how the batteries can be used at the end of their useful life on a bus. Ms. Cochran indicated that at approximately eight years, the batteries would need to be replaced; however, she indicated that they still have approximately 75% battery power remaining. She indicated that other city services, such as the electric department have been able to use the batteries for a second use or that some transit systems have used the batteries for facility needs.

Ms. Cochran indicated that the April meeting would provide a CyRide specific analysis of electric bus technology using a modeling process.

NORTH GRAND MALL PROPOSAL: Director Kyras provided an update on CyRide's discussions with North Grand Mall personnel on relocating the bus stop on their property from the east to the west side of the mall. She presented four options that had been considered by both parties. For each location, she described the location of each stop, the infrastructure changes that would be needed and cost of the construction and then directed board members to the comparison chart with this information. Based on this information she indicated that both CyRide and the mall believe that the second option would benefit both organizations at a cost of approximately \$64,000; however, indicated that several changes had been suggested. First, the mall representatives indicated that one bus could stop at the mall with the remaining buses in the parking lot near Ferndale Dr. Second, CyRide indicated that only three buses would be at the mall at one time, instead of the four shown on the maps and included in the cost estimates. Based on this input, option #2A was developed reflecting these changes, which reduced the cost to \$37,575.

Director Kyras indicated that the next steps were to discuss the options with the Transit Board and the mall representatives would also be discussing the options with their owners group and then both parties would again meet to discuss how to proceed forward with the bus stop change. She then asked board members for their input on the cost, sharing of the cost, an agreement length and any construction parameters they would like to have included in finalizing the discussions.

Trustee Schainker asked for further clarification on right-of-way issues with several of the options. Brent Schipper of ASK Studio, the architectural firm assisting CyRide with the project, indicated that, after further investigation, there would be no right-of-way issues on any of the options. Trustee Schainker asked staff to confirm that the loss of parking spaces under each of the options would comply with city requirements.

Trustee Schainker indicated a concern with option #2A regarding the requirement for customers to exit the bus in the parking lot and walk through the lot to the mall. He indicated that a painted crosswalk or signage regarding pedestrians could help increase safety. Board members came to the following general consensus on priorities for future discussions between the two parties.

- Equal funding share of the improvements
- Formal agreement, in as long a term as possible, preferably 20 years
- One-time payment to the mall for their organization to complete the improvements

Director Kyras shared staff's perspective on the closing balance at the end of fiscal year 2018, stating that she anticipated approximately \$200,000 above the required 10% balance due to fuel costs remaining below budget estimates and that a portion of these funds could be used for purposes like this expense.

A concern was raised regarding truck traffic in the area of the bus stop and a location for customers to be sheltered while waiting for the bus. Director Kyras indicated that a majority of the truck traffic would be located just north of the bus stop at the truck dock, minimizing rider conflicts and that the mall representatives indicated they would be putting tables/seating in front of the entrance for riders to use.

FACILITY EXPANSION OPTIONS 1 and 2: Director Kyras explained that staff had developed two of the four facility expansion options requested by the transit board and that the remaining two options would be presented at the April board meeting.

Director Kyras then provided a brief recap of the current conditions of CyRide's two facility sites, indicating that approximately 25% of the fleet was currently housed outdoors and that its current facilities did not meet the space needs identified in the facility needs analysis completed last fall. She then recapped the four options staff had been directed to develop.

- **First option** - Remain at the current site; however, develop an off-site employee parking lot and reuse the existing parking lot for additional facility space needs for up to 95 buses.
- **Second option** – CyRide would maintain two permanent locations and have the second facility within a half mile of its existing site for up to 125 buses meeting the space needs requirements identified for this sized fleet.

- **Third option** – This option is the same as option #2, except that the second site would be located more than ½ mile from CyRide’s existing site.
- **Fourth option** – A large enough site where, over time, CyRide could consolidate its operations together at the new site.

Director Kyras shared that the analysis completed on each of the four options was conceptual and that each option was based on many assumptions, so that a fair comparison between options could be made and board members could determine the best option to further pursue. Further, she indicated that when an option is ultimately chosen as the preferred choice, staff would then refine this option into a “workable” solution for the transit system. She also indicated that none of the options included the new CDL required, training course for CyRide’s use only.

Director Kyras began the presentation by briefly illustrating the current bus parking configuration, with buses parked outside and in areas not typically designed for this purpose, which were indicated with an “x” in these locations on the facility illustration provided. Director Kyras then provided a basic description of option #1, which originally located the off-site employee parking at Brookside Park; however, after discussions with city staff, it was determined that this site would not be available. Staff then based this option’s analysis on an ISU site at Haber Rd, just north of the railroad tracks. Brent Schipper with ASK Studio described the current facility changes, as well as two parking options for the Haber Rd. site. Director Kyras then provided cost information (20-yr. cost of approximately \$25 million) for this option, which included an employee shuttle and the percent of CyRide’s current space needs addressed (41-44%). She also expressed two concerns with the site. First, that it was located in a floodplain and second that there was no walkable path between the Haber Rd. site and CyRide’s current facility. She indicated that employees would need to walk through Brookside Park and back to CyRide’s facility at approximately 1 mile each direction.

Mr. Schipper then explained the second option, utilizing CyRide’s current facility, as well as a second facility at the Haber Rd. site to meet the space needs for a fleet of 125 buses. He indicated that almost all of the construction would be on the Haber Rd. site, with only a small bus /tire and part storage addition to the current facility. The Haber Rd. site would include: second fuel lane, bus storage for approximately 68 vehicles, flood protection, administrative and maintenance bays per space need requirements and employee parking for 50 cars. Director Kyras then provided cost information (20-yr. cost of approximately \$30 million) for this option and the percent of CyRide’s current space needs addressed (100%). She also expressed the same two concerns with the site: floodplain and walking distance. An additional concern for this option would be that CyRide could not operate a portion of its fleet through the Haber tunnel, requiring a much longer distance to move buses between the two facilities.

Trustee Cain requested a side-by-side comparison of each of the options so that board members could fully understand and weigh the options being offered. Director Kyras indicated that this would be provided at the April board meeting.

Trustee Schainker asked how CyRide could afford the options presented. Director Kyras replied that the costs were conceptual only for comparison purposes between the options. Further, she indicated they would need to be refined, through architectural/engineering designs, and further refinement of how CyRide could operate with multiple buildings/sites. She also indicated that the costs provided at the meeting represented full build-out of the concepts and that CyRide would, most likely, be expanding facilities as it could secure funding through grants over time.

Trustee Schainker indicated that he would like the comparison to include the cost to repay FTA and a discussion on grant opportunities to pay for a new facility. Director Kyras indicated that the costs being discussed were only for comparison purposes between the options and that better cost estimates would need to be developed to be included in grant applications.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT: Director Kyras reported on three topics of possible interest to the board. First, she indicated that the Iowa DOT had begun the process to determine which transit systems would receive new bus funding through the statewide allocations. She indicated from their data, that CyRide could anticipate funding for possibly 3-4 buses this year. She indicated that one last funding opportunity could possibly fund additional buses up to the transit board approved amount of 5 buses, which would be if the federal government approved the state's urban bus grant. She also indicated that the Iowa DOT predicted next year's funding and which buses might be eligible for replacement and CyRide could possibly receive funding for three buses; however, it only currently has one bus included in the Capital Improvement Plan. She indicated this plan would need to be modified in the next Capital Plan development process to be presented to the Transit Board in December of this year.

Second, Director Kyras indicated that she had attended the Iowa Public Transit Association's (IPTA) meeting in Washington, DC with congressional staff. She stated that priorities for the transit group were to ensure full-funding for the FY18 and FY19 transit appropriations and to return funds to the Bus and Bus Facilities grant program. She also indicated that the new Administration's focus is on public-private partnerships, so future grants may have this criteria included in their evaluation criteria, which could make receiving funds more difficult in Ames.

Third, Director Kyras updated the board on a CyRide 2.0 impact regarding its contract with Durham School Services. With significantly fewer "extra" buses in the CyRide 2.0 route structure, the "extra" school buses provided by Durham will no longer be needed. Therefore, CyRide gave this firm notice that the contract will be cancelled effective at the end of this school year.

Set Meeting Times and Place:

A special conference call for the transit board will be scheduled between April 4 and 6, 2018 to address a construction project and equipment purchase. Joanne VanDyke, CyRide's Secretary, will coordinate a date/time for this meeting.

- April 19, 2018, 3:30 PM
- May 29, 2018, 3:30 PM

ADJOURN: Trustee Bilibioni made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m. and motion was seconded by Trustee Nelson. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Steven Valentino, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary