

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

September 17, 2018

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on September 17, 2018 at 8:00 a.m. in CyRide's Conference room. President Bibiloni called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. with Trustees Jeffrey, Cain, Schainker, and Schrader present. Absent: Trustee Nelson.

Approval of August 15, 2018 Minutes: Trustee Jeffrey made a motion to adopt the August 15, 2018 transit board minutes as presented. Trustee Cain seconded the motion. (Ayes: Five. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

Public Comments: No general public comments were received; however, Director Kyras provided a handout summarizing the CyRide 2.0 public comments received to-date. She provided a brief analysis of the comments, noting customer suggestions where more comments had been received – Peach, Lilac, Cherry, and Gold routes.

Service Planning for 2019-2020 Budget Year: Director Kyras provided a description of the service planning project timeline and activities over the next few months to establish 2019-2020 service levels through the budget process. She indicated that in light of CyRide 2.0, the process would be slightly different with a preliminary evaluation of the new system and identification of potential service changes, resulting in approval of service changes in the spring. She indicated that the preliminary evaluation would allow board members to establish budget options, which could serve as a "place holder," within the budget, so that specific changes, up to the specific dollar amount approved in the budget, could be considered after more data on the new system was compiled by the end of the year.

Director Kyras then recapped the summer CyRide 2.0 service changes and recommended no changes with these services in the next budget. Both the EASE and Yellow route services were operating with higher ridership and had received positive comments from its customers. She indicated that preliminary information regarding the fall changes indicated that the system was operating as expected, with one exception of the #3 Blue route that was operating 10 minutes behind schedule due to the number of people using the route and the need to stop at every bus stop on the route.

Trustee Nelson arrived at 8:08 am.

Trustee Cain asked if DMACC students ride as public and pay a fare and Director Kyras said indicated that they did.

Trustee Jeffrey asked if CyRide had a tool to assist passengers with which routes and times to take a bus to arrive at their destination. Director Kyras shared that its website includes a Google Transit Planner, which provides schedule information to plan a trip.

Director Kyras indicated that the October meeting would include preliminary descriptions and costs for potential service enhancements for next year and that, if approved by the board, the December meeting would include a board-directed budget option(s) that could include a budget increase to accommodate any or all of these recommendations.

Facility Site Analysis – Fatal Flaw Analysis: Director Kyras provided a brief recap of the activities completed to date on the facility site analysis and the results of the initial fatal flaw analysis. She indicated that through this analysis the original 188 sites that met the 8+ acre criteria was narrowed to 62 sites using the fatal flaw criteria and directed board members to maps within the board information that visually located these sites. She also stated that several of the parcels had buildings on the site and that these locations were also eliminated from consideration. She indicated that this analysis has not been completed, as she will need to talk to several landowners to determine if the sites are available. She specifically indicated that there were several sites close to the Airport that the city owned and would need to see if the Federal Aviation regulations would allow these locations to be considered for a transit facility.

Director Kyras indicated that she was seeking board input to determine if the format of the information provided to the board members regarding each of the sites was sufficient for board consideration and recommended additional criteria to further narrow the sites to a more manageable number of sites for more intense analysis. Her recommendation was to eliminate sites with less than 15 available acres and sites east of I-35. She indicated that fifteen acres would allow CyRide to be able to consider consolidating its operations into the new site over time and parcels under 15 acres would eliminate this possibility. She also indicated that sites east of I-35 would increase CyRide's daily operating costs, as most of CyRide's fleet begins service in the south or west portion of the city. She indicated that if these two additional criteria were incorporated into the analysis, the number of available sites would be reduced to 17. Director Kyras then briefly explained each of the 17 sites.

Trustee Nelson provided his insight into one of the sites located along Mortensen Rd. just west of University Blvd., indicating that it included a part of a city park and the extreme terrain would be difficult as a building site. Director Kyras indicated that this was suggested as a "partnership" site with city and ISU land adjacent to each other in the possibility that it could accommodate the building within the two sites combined.

Trustee Nelson asked Director Kyras if the land was required to be within the city limits. Director Kyras indicated that there was no requirement on where the site was located; however, the farther from the center of Ames/CyRide's current site the higher the operating costs would be for CyRide. He recommended looking at sites west of the city limits, in the area of Ontario and 240th Street.

The conversation then turned toward a discussion of sites identified near the airport. Trustee Schainker shared that one of the sites is the location where the solar park will be built on Airport Road. Cathy Brown shared her thoughts that she supported the partnership sites, which allowed multiple agencies to share in the future of CyRide.

Board members agreed, by consensus to add recommended additional criteria to narrow the 66 sites by eliminating sites with less than 15 acres and sites east of I-35 and to add site in Boone County near the west side of Ames.

2017-2018 PRELIMINARY CLOSING BALANCE: Director Kyras explained that CyRide and City Finance staff had developed preliminary closing balance predictions, pre-audit, to share with board members. Further, she indicated that recent Iowa DOT grants for new bus opportunities required local funding, as well as an electric bus study and was the reason for the analysis at this time. She indicated that since these funding requests are one-time expenditures, the funds in excess of the board-approved 10% closing balance could be used to fund these opportunities. She began by explaining the 2017-2018 preliminary closing balance (\$4,316,970) and the commitments the board had previously made for a portion of the amount in excess of the 10%. She indicated that the result was an uncommitted balance above 10% of \$697,720 that could be used for newly identified capital and operating expenses.

She then provided information to board members regarding six capital/operating needs for which this uncommitted closing balance could support - ACA expenses, facility expansion, additional CyRide 2.0 services, bus replacement, electric bus study, increasing the 10% operating balance to reflect 2019-2020 operating expense levels. She provided a brief expansion of each need and the total dollars for each.

Trustee Schainker made a motion to approve Alternative #1 to table action at this time and consider committing the operating closing balance throughout the year as opportunities and board priorities are identified. Trustee Schrader seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

ELECTRIC BUS STUDY PROPOSALS AND AWARD: Director Kyras provided board members with a summary of the results of the Electric Bus Study Request for Proposal (RFP). She indicated that two proposals were received from CTE and CALSTART with a significant difference in cost. She indicated that she telephoned the high bidder, CTE, and asked if their firm had estimated the cost based on the scope of work contained in the RFP. They indicated that their proposal was based on additional work to provide CyRide with a comprehensive electric bus evaluation. The Director requested that they revise their proposal to reflect only the scope of work. The CTE second proposal was virtually the same cost as the CALSTART proposal. She indicated that cost was not the only evaluation factor, and after applying the full evaluation criteria, CTE offered the best proposal for CyRide. She indicated that this firm had completed numerous projects in cold weather climates, similar to Ames, and that the benefits of electric buses were

challenged the greatest in cold weather months. She also indicated that their proposal partnered with an engineering firm to provide more in-depth analysis of the facility.

The Director then explained two options for funding the approximately \$50,000 study - Small Transit Intensive Cities funding (STIC) or the operating closing balance, in utilizing a portion of the dollars in excess of 10%.

Trustee Nelson shared his concern with requesting a second proposal from CTE, indicating that the August board packet had including both firms original cost information, which was prior to receiving the second proposal.

Board members then discussed the pros and cons of proceeding as presented versus rejecting the bids and rebidding the project. Director Kyras indicated that waiting to rebid the project would not allow CyRide to proceed with a cold weather demonstration in 2019 and potentially prepare a grant application for summer 2019 funding opportunities - delaying the possibility of purchasing buses by one year.

There was a general discussion regarding using STIC funding or funding the project from the operating closing balance.

Trustee Cain made a motion to approve Alternative #1 to award the project to CTE for \$49,941 to be funded through CyRide's operating closing balance, subject to the City of Ames Purchasing Department's approval of the bidding process. Trustee Jeffrey seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

MECHANIC ASSISTANT WAGE CHANGE: Director Kyras summarized the difficulty CyRide had, had in recruiting for an Assistant Mechanic, indicating that the board has previously approved a \$2,000 hiring bonus to encourage more applicants. She indicated that even with this bonus the 4th recruitment had failed. As a result, CyRide and City staff had developed four possible changes for the next recruitment - increase the initial starting wage, referral bonus, compressing the application/testing phase of the recruitment and enhanced advertising. Two of the four changes require board action - increasing the initial wage from \$20.47 to \$21.35, which would make CyRide and the City's Fleet Services Assistant Mechanic wages the same (currently CyRide's is lower) making the most more attractive to applicants and extending CyRide's \$500 employee referral bonus to this position as well as the drivers. She indicated that the union had approved the wage increase, pending city approval.

Trustee Cain asked for clarification of the recommendation as to whether it included a starting wage of \$21.35 per hour and the \$500 hiring bonus. Director Kyras indicated that she was correct.

Trustee Nelson made a motion to approve Alternative #1 to increase the Step A Mechanic Assistant's wage rate to \$21.35 per hour effective immediately upon approval

by the Ames City Council and extend the employee referral bonus to this position. Trustee Jeffrey seconded the motion. (Ayes: Six. Nays: None.) Motion carried.

QUARTERLY OPERATIONS REPORT: Director Kyras provided details on the system performance for the transit board for the last quarter of the 2017-2018 fiscal year, April to June.

- She indicated that total passengers were higher for the fourth quarter due to the Odyssey of the Mind event, but that total ridership was down 1.3% or 85,692 rides for the year.

Trustee Cain requested further clarification on the summary report legend. Director Kyras indicated that a red cell on the chart indicated a negative trend, green a positive trend and yellow neutral.

Director Kyras briefly discussed reasons for the ridership decline - lower student enrollment, more housing closer to campus, which is walkable, fewer DAR (Dial-A-Ride) customers, Uber and Lyft impact on Moonlight Express.

- She indicated that CyRide started the year with 139 drivers (very short) and ended the year with 152 drivers.
- She stated that the percent of preventable accidents were positive for the year, which means that fewer accidents were a result of driver error.
- She informed board members that CyRide received more customer comments this past year than the previous year.
- She indicated that farebox revenues continue to trend downward. The fare reduction occurred in the middle of the last quarter, so no data can be obtained from this report regarding the impact of lower fares.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- 1) **ISU Enrollment Impact:** Fall enrollment numbers were released with Fall 2018 enrollment at 34,992. CyRide's budget is based upon enrollment of 36,072. This represents a 2.8% reduction in students and student fees to support CyRide service. Director Kyras indicated that CyRide will receive an estimated \$165,676 less in student revenues this year as a result. She indicated that this will have a negative impact on the Student Government Trust Fund and will significantly reduce the trust fund balance. She indicated this is a consideration for future budgets.

Trustee Schainker asked where the funds for Moonlight Express are secured and if there were opportunities to deliver this service in a different manner to reduce expenses. Director Kyras said all three funding parties currently fund Moonlight Express. She also stated that she had, had a brief conversation with a Lyft representative about looking into the possibilities of coordinating with the firm to deliver parts of CyRide service, specifically with Moonlight Express in mind. She indicated that this discussion had not progressed further than this, but could be a consideration for the future. Trustee Cain

suggested possibly coordinating with ISU's Parking Division to identify different ways to deliver this service.

Trustee Schainker expressed a concern about lower ridership from the Research Park. Director Kyras indicated that Research representatives and employees had expressed a desire for more service through the System Redesign. She indicated that staff was monitoring all CyRide 2.0 routes and would be providing board members with an analysis of the service later in the fall.

- 2) Ridership Statistics First Two Weeks of Fall Semester:** Director Kyras indicated that ridership was slightly lower, which has been the trend and with lower enrollment this year was pleased with the ridership to-date.
- 3) CyRide 2.0 Service Modifications Made To-Date:** Director Kyras summarized a list of low or no cost CyRide 2.0 modifications completed to-date to provide the best possible service for CyRide customers. These changes included new bus stops, an added morning trip and requests to the city for pedestrian crossings.
- 4) Monthly Financial Report:** Director Kyras indicated that CyRide 2.0 goals included a financial performance measure of .5% above or below the approved operating expenses. Staff has developed a new monthly tool to determine the impact of the CyRide 2.0 services on expenses. Staff will review this report each month and make minor modification as needed. More significant changes to address the budget will be brought to the board for approval.
- 5) Fuel Price Update:** Director Kyras shared information regarding fuel prices. She indicated that CyRide ended the 2017-2018 fiscal year at an average of \$1.99 per gallon and budgeted \$2.50 a gallon. This year (2018-2019) \$2.75 per gallon was budgeted and CyRide has averaged \$2.23 per gallon year-to-date.
- 6) New Federal Safety & Security Regulation:** Director Kyras shared information regarding new federal requirements that became effective on July 19, 2018 and that CyRide staff will need to comply with by July 20, 2020. These regulations require completion of an Agency Safety Plan and requirement for a Chief Safety Officer position within the organization. She indicated that this may have a budget impact as it may require hiring an additional staff person to comply with the regulation.
- 7) Transit Asset Management Plan:** Director Kyras updated board members on this newer federal requirement, indicating that it would be completed within the next few days and that staff would meet the October 1st deadline. She indicated that the result of the document would be presented to the board in November and would provide one more data point for identifying capital needs.

Fall Meeting Dates/Times:

- October 24, 2018 – 8:30 A.M.

- November 14, 2018 – 8:00 A.M.
- December 12, 2018 – 8:00 A.M.

Adjourn: Trustee Jeffrey made a motion to adjourn at 9:20 a.m. Motion seconded by Trustee Schrader. Motion carried.

Juan Bibiloni, President

Joanne Van Dyke, Recording Secretary