

AMES TRANSIT AGENCY BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AMES, IOWA

April 8, 2020

The Ames Transit Agency Board of Trustees met on April 8, 2020 at 4:15 p.m. in CyRide's Conference room. Trustee Jeffrey called the meeting to order at 4:16 p.m. with Trustees Beatty-Hansen, Cain, Schainker, and Schrader present via telephone.

ELECTRONIC MEETING DECLARATION: This meeting is being held electronically because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Governor of Iowa's Public Health Disaster Emergency Declaration which included limits on public gatherings; therefore, it is impractical to hold an in-person meeting." (§21.8(1)(c) and §21.3)

APPROVAL OF MARCH 4, 2020 MINUTES: Trustee Cain made a motion to adopt the March 4, 2020 transit board minutes as presented and Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

FY2020 FEDERAL GRANT APPLICATION: Director Neal said staff is requesting the execution of a grant application to the FTA for formula funding under section 5307. The FY2020 budget reflects \$2,250,000 in funding, but the total formula is \$244,129 higher than what was budgeted. Director Neal further explained the difference between the apportionment from FY2019 to FY2020 was due to population and population density for which the amount increased by \$25,032 under section 5307 and STIC (Small Transit Intensive Cities) outperforming transit systems with populations of 200,000-999,999 for an increase of \$62,732. She further explained how STIC funding is awarded and that CyRide is rated on 6 categories, of which 5 categories have historically been achieved. Director Neal added that the second category that measures passenger miles traveled per vehicle revenue hour has never been achieved by CyRide.

Director Neal recommended approval of Alternative 1 which directs staff to submit a grant application for federal operating assistance in the amount of \$2,494,129 to the Federal Transit Administration.

Trustee Beatty-Hansen made a motion to authorize the Transit Director to execute and file a Section 5307 grant application in the amount of \$2,494,129 to the Federal Transit Administration. Trustee Schrader seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

TURNAROUND PROJECT AWARD: Director Neal stated that the bid for the CyRide 2020 Pavement Improvements Middle School Turnaround Project was released on March 10, 2020. She explained that this project will replace deteriorating pavement and sidewalks in front of the Ames Middle School as well as improvements to the existing retaining wall and detectable warning strips in the crosswalks along Mortensen Rd.

Director Neal said that four bids were received for the project and that Jensen Builders, LTD of Des Moines, IA submitted the low bid of \$139,700. The total budgeted in the Capital Improvement Plan was \$150,000.

Director recommends approval of Alternative 1, which awards a contract in the amount of \$139,700 to Jensen Builders, LTD of Des Moines, Iowa.

Trustee Schrader made a motion to approve Alternative 1, which awards a contract to Jensen Builders, LTD of Des Moines, Iowa for the bid amount of \$139,700. Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. (Ayes: 5 Nays: None) Motion carried.

COVID-19 UPDATE - INFORMATIONAL

Director Neal explained that CyRide's priorities during this pandemic are to protect passengers and employees. Daily disinfection of buses and the facility has been done since February 28, 2020 with increased frequency, including crews scheduled for on route cleaning and for facility disinfection. Other increased measures include using a disinfectant sprayer that uses static electricity to cling to surfaces, suspending fare collection to have passengers enter and exit through the rear doors to limit close contact and screening employees at the door before entering the building to mitigate exposure among employees and the public.

Director Neal stated that personal protective equipment such as hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and gloves are being provided to employees. She said that getting supplies has been a struggle, but the City of Ames Purchasing Department and ISU Central Stores have been instrumental in obtaining supplies.

Director Neal explained that the FFCRA has expanded pay options due to COVID-19 and that FMLA has been expanded to allow care for children due to school closures. She added that restrictions on time off without pay have been waived. Further, employees have been enabled to request use of their vacation leave or compensatory time if they choose to self-isolate by submitting requests for leave.

Board President Bibiloni joined the call at 4:23pm.

Several steps are being taken to maintain social distancing on the buses. The driver seat to the first set of seats is over 6 feet, which maintains social distancing guidelines. A chain barrier to the driver area and signage has been added to the buses to encourage passengers to sit further back. Director Neal stated that if there are more than 9 passengers on the bus, we are sending

another bus to pick up passengers. She added that videos, service alerts and posters are being posted to the website, social media and in our building in order to help educate employees and the public on measures they can take based on CDC and Iowa Department of Public Health guidelines. Staff has also implemented new ways to load passengers using a wheelchair that will lessen exposure between the passenger and the driver. In addition, per CDC guidance, the drivers have the option of wearing a fabric face mask.

Director Neal stated that ridership has experienced a dramatic drop during the pandemic, decreasing from approximately 33,000 rides per day, to under 1,000 rides per day. CyRide is currently operating a weekday break schedule with a Cherry Route to service the most western part of Ames. She added that while people are encouraged to stay at home, CyRide is an essential service that transports people to and from work, doctor appointments and other necessary places, such as the grocery store. Director Neal said that ridership will continue to be monitored very closely and that passenger boarding are being tracked on the bus tablet technology; a handout that maps out the current boarding activity was referenced.

Trustee Jeffery asked if there are currently enough drivers. Director Neal said that there currently is enough staff and that several drivers are now in disinfecting shifts or providing bathroom breaks to on route drivers as many places with restrooms that were previously available are now closed. Director Neal explained the plans for service if there is a shelter in place order, which would change service to a Saturday Break Schedule. The plan would also use a team approach that would have two groups of drivers, an A and B group alternating work and standby schedules; one group would work for 7 days and then be on standby for 7 days to allow for isolation of any drivers that were potentially exposed. Director Neal pointed out that this information slightly differs from the information in the board packet, which stated 14 days working and 14 days on standby. This has been updated to a 7 day rotation as further guidance has been received and would allow employees to keep their health insurance.

TRANSIT DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

- 1. Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act:** Director Neal said that there are financial implications associated with the pandemic and that staff is currently tracking expenses, pandemic specific hours worked and lost revenue. She shared that the FTA announced on April 2, 2020 that \$25 billion was being allocated to urban and rural transit systems via the CARES Act. Based on current information, CyRide could receive over \$7,000,000 in CARES funding for operating expenses. She further explained that this is a fluid situation and additional details and further clarification will be shared as they are available.

- 2. Federal Triennial On-Site Review Delayed until after October 1, 2020:** The on-site review that was scheduled on May 5 & 6, 2020 has been delayed until at least October 1, 2020. Outstanding items include the update of Transit Planner's job description by Human Resources to include that they are the DBE Liaison officer and a manual with financial procedures from Finance.
- 3. Intermodal Leases:** Tenants of the Intermodal Facility are struggling with cash flow due to the pandemic. Executive Express asked for an amendment to their contract, which would defer their rent for 90 days, allowing them to not pay rent for April, May and June and spread that amount over the next 12 months. Jefferson Lines eliminated most of service and is also asking for the same amendment. Director Neal has contacted the City of Ames Legal Department for contract amendments.
- 4. Houck Advertising:** The provider of the advertising on the buses has asked for relief from their contract due to the pandemic. Currently the contract states that there is a 60/40 split of revenues on a monthly and annual basis, with guaranteed minimums. They have requested that we suspend the guaranteed monthly minimum and that the revenue be split 60/40. Director Neal said that Houck's contract is up for renewal in July and that she will be contacting the City Legal Department to update the language pertaining to this situation would bring this item back to the board for consideration if the board had no objections. Trustee Jeffery stated that this sounded reasonable.

Next Meeting Dates/Times:

- May 13, 2020 – 4:15 pm
- June 10, 2020 - 4:15 pm

Adjourn: Trustee Cain made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Trustee Beatty-Hansen seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 4:43p.m. (Ayes: 6 Nays: None) Motion carried.

Juan Bibiloni, President

Julie Brousard, Recording Secretary