

The Board of Trustees of the Sangamon Mass Transit District met in a regular session on February 26, 2024, in the Training Room of the Sangamon Mass Transit District located at 928 South Ninth Street, Springfield, Illinois. The Meeting called to order at 4:30 PM by Brian Brewer, Chairperson.

I. ROLL CALL Present:

Brian Brewer	Chairperson
Sue Davsko	Vice Chairperson
Leslie McCarthy	Board Secretary
Karen Hasara	Treasurer
Jerry Doss	Trustee
Sandra Douglas	Trustee

Not Present:

Wynne Coplea	Trustee
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II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Trustee McCarthy made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 29, 2024, regular meeting of the Board of Trustees, seconded by Trustee Doss. The motion passed unanimously.

III. DIRECTORS REPORTS

Managing Director Steve Schoeffel updated the trustees on construction progress of the transfer center. He reported that the customer service office, operators' breakroom, and restrooms are nearing completion, waiting for a fire panel and refrigerator to be installed. The public area is scheduled to be completed in late March. Planning is underway for a preview of Transfer Center, for the board and staff prior to opening to the public. He also shared work continues at the South Storage paint and body shop. The paint booth has been installed and work on the of the office and break area are under way with completion expected late spring.

Schoeffel thanked DOP Melissa Ashford for taking on additional HR duties and noted a new HR Director will start March 1. He also acknowledged DOF Michelle Alexander and Ashford for their effort in researching the new employee health insurance coverage plan.

Director Schoeffel welcomed 6 new employees who recently completed their probation period, Paratransit Operators Davion Joiner, Kory Pohlman and fixed route drivers Christopher Harris, Felcia Logan, Roger McKinney and Ginger White. Congratulations and welcome to the SMTD team.

Director of Operations Melissa Ashford explained the annual HR reporting functions have been completed. She also noted a review of route adjustments have begun prior to June implementation with updates on night service, as well as day service gaps affecting the Helping Hands Center and Toronto Road areas. She reported ridership remains constant for Fixed Route and ACCESS Paratransit numbers continue to grow.

IV. REPORTS**A. Approval of November Financial Statements and Cash Disbursements**

Trustee Doss made a motion to approve the December Financial Statements and Accounts Payable Disbursements, seconded by Trustee McCarthy the motion passed unanimously.

B. Board Committee Reports:

Finance: No report.

Operations: No report.

Administration: No report.

IT Steering: No report.

C. Planning Commission Report: Jason Sass of the Planning Commission reported the Active Transportation Plan Committee is in the process of scoring applications and packaging materials for the Active Transportation Plan. No interviews have been scheduled at this time. Sass noted that an update for the Title VI plan will be completed and available within the month. He also noted a timeline for the 2050, 25-year Horizon Plan has been established for short-, medium-, and long-range projects in the area.

D. SMTD ADA Advisory Committee Report: Pete Roberts thanked the board for approving their name change to the SMTD ADA Advisory Committee. Roberts mentioned the committee will be adding ADA education and training to their agenda. He also noted the committee is working with DOP Ashford in the process for the recruitment of new members to the committee. The next committee meeting will be March 21 at 10:30 via Zoom.

V. NEW BUSINESS:**a. Consider Award to AECOM for the Comprehensive Operations Plan for Second Transfer Hub and Renewable Energy Source Options**

Managing Director Steve Schoeffel explained to board in 2022, as approved by Board Resolution 2023-17, SMTD applied for a competitive planning grant through a State application for federal Section 5305(e) State Planning and Research program for balanced and comprehensive planning, engineering, design, and evaluation studies of public and non-public transportation modes that are included in the metropolitan or statewide transportation planning process. SMTD was awarded funds to complete a comprehensive transportation study to analyze a secondary transfer center, increase accessibility and mobility of ridership, incorporate renewable energy sources, and review overall functioning of the public transportation system in greater urbanized area of Springfield. SMTD currently uses an on-street transfer center in the Junction Circle area. SMTD, with guidance from IDOT, released a Request for Proposals (RFP). SMTD released RFP #2023-06 and received two proposals. SMTD interviewed both proposers and is requesting to award a contract to the top scorer. The top scorer is AECOM. AECOM is an infrastructure consulting firm who have worked directly with transit

agencies to provide operations analysis, capital planning, cost modeling and ridership forecasting services. AECOM submitted a proposal to aid in the transition to a zero emissions fleet, offer transportation planning services, and design transit facility infrastructure. SMTD will use funding from a State Planning grant, Federal Funding and Local Funds. Funding is provided in the following split \$160,000 provided by federal funding, \$20,000 provided by State Planning Grant, and \$39,443.05 provided by SMTD for a total budget of \$219,443.05. SMTD will use local funds for their portion of this project.

AECOM's Chelsey Waterman (project manager) and Cole Pouliot (building infrastructure specialist) made a Zoom presentation to the board regarding a Comprehensive Operations study of current facility and the new secondary hub and additional fuel generation possibilities for the future.

The study will establish goals and objectives to improve rider experience and explore, the use of the secondary Hub in advancing the use of low and no emission vehicles. To achieve this, an analysis of current fuel consumption and infrastructure will need to be completed, to determine current and future and power needs while exploring onsite energy production.

Trustee Hasara inquired on timeline of study; Waterman responded the proposal had an 18-month timeframe but was confident it could be completed in 12 months.

Chairman Brewer noted the initial proposal indicated a completion of December 2024. Waterman explained that was with a start date of January 2024 she further indicated she was confident the study would be completed and available within 12 months from start of study.

Trustee Doss asked if there are other local agencies who have had similar studies and their success.

Director Schoeffel explained the RFP includes a provision that allows for communication with Champaign MTD to explore the hydrogen as fuel option.

Chairman Brewer noted the ability to speak with another local agency in central Illinois will be an advantage as we move forward.

Trustee Doss asked if the new vehicles are EV or hydrogen?

Director Schoeffel, shared the current fleet comprises diesel and CNG buses. The eight new vehicles scheduled for arrival this spring are diesel electric hybrid further reducing our diesel fuel only inventory as continue transitioning to zero emission options.

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Trustee McCarthy made a motion to authorize the Managing Director to enter into a contract with AECOM for \$219,443.05 seconded by Trustee Douglas. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Consider proposed Rate for 15-month Contract with BCBS, 4-1-24-6-30-25

Managing Director Steve Schoeffel explained to the board currently, SMTD offers health, dental, vision, and life insurance through a fully insured group plan provided by Health Alliance with administration & compliance assistance provided by Troxell, SMTD's contracted third-party administrator since 2016. Over the past three years, SMTD has experienced considerable increases in the rates for the benefit plans. Last year, the group plan renewal rates presented by Troxell called for a 22.37% increase over the prior year's rates. Original rates proposed for FY24 called for a 30% increase, but SMTD opted to make changes last year to deductible levels and out of pocket maximums to decrease the premium rates. Including FY24, SMTD has received a 44.87% increase in health insurance premium costs for FY22-FY24. Fringe benefits is one of the largest areas of costs for the District, after Salary. Plan usage remains high, which Troxell identifies as the reason for the increases over the past several years. With a newly negotiated contract between Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) and the Springfield Clinic, SMTD is considering the proposal presented tonight. BCBS has proposed an aggressive proposal, offering a 15-month contract, from 04/01/2024-06/30/2025, instead of the regular 12-month contract, as well as offered to honor amounts paid towards deductibles starting on January 1, 2024, as the deductible year runs concurrent to the calendar. Total health insurance costs projected for current plan year 24 are roughly \$2.9 million, which includes funding for the District's OPEB Trust. The 3-month changeover to BCBS during FY24 will result in projected savings of less than \$20,000. For plan year 2025, budgeted plan costs for the year will decrease by approximately \$65,000 compared to the FY24 premiums. Open enrollment will be in March 2024 due to this unique situation. SMTD will consider the financial impact, as SMTD will see adjustments in various areas of the budget, including fringe benefits and OPEB trust fund projections. Staff will incorporate these changes into the proposed FY25 budget, which is being prepared at present.

Troxell's Joe Ludke SMTD's health insurance broker made a presentation to the board regarding the employee health insurance program with a recommendation to change providers from Health Alliance to BCBS.

Ludke explained BCBS became an option with the recent agreement reached between BCBS and Springfield Clinic. He explained BCBS was willing to become SMTD's carrier and as incentive offered an initial 15-month contract with a saving of \$10,000.00 per month to the district for the first 3 months. The plan also included a dental program with rates locked in for 15 months as well as a vision plan with no increase for 4 years. He also shared BCBS prescription program with its size and utilization of generics will have a beneficial cost savings to SMTD.

Trustee Douglas asked for clarification that the new BCBS program currently does not offer an HMO option including SC. Ludke confirmed SC is not a current provider of BCBC HMO however he was optimistic an HMO plan with SC might be added in the future.

Director Steve Schoeffel explained there had been several internal meetings with ATU union leadership regarding the carrier change and they agree with the switch.

Assistant Director of Finance Tim Wenthe inquired with Ludke would there be a penalty for changing carriers before the current contract with Health Alliance ended. He responded no.

Chairman Brewer asked Ludke if employee participation in the HSA plan had increased, he responded no significant change at this time.

Director of Operations Melissa Ashford explained most employees choose higher deductible plans with HRA, these plans have first dollar coverage. HSA plans have a \$5000.00 deductible that SMTD adopted when the Federal Mandate was implemented for part time employees. Those employees are on the lower end of the pay scale and the HSA is most affordable, however most employees do not choose this option. There has been discussion on options to make this benefit more affordable.

Trustee Douglas made a motion to accept Blue Cross Blue Shield's proposal and enter into a 15-month contract, seconded by Trustee McCarthy. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Consider Authorizing Resolution to Execute Grant Application, FAIN 1187-2023-1

Managing Director Steve Schoeffel explained to the board through the Federal Transit Administration FY 2022 Section and FY 2023 5307 Urbanized Area Apportionments, SMTD annually receives an apportionment of funding. The Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program (49 USC 5307) makes federal resources available for transit capital, operating assistance, and transportation-related planning in urbanized areas. An urbanized area is an area that has been defined and designated by the US Dept of Commerce, Bureau of the Census as an "Urban Area" with a population of 50,000 to 199,000 in population, the formula is based on population, low-income populations, and population density. These urbanized areas are also eligible to receive Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) funds if transit service provided in the urbanized area meets or exceeds the STIC performance criteria. The federal share is not to exceed 80 percent of the net project costs for capital expenditures, and 50 percent of the net project cost of operating assistance. For capital projects SMTD requests the use of Transportation Development Credits (TDCs), which allow SMTD to use federal funds at 100 percent of project costs. To obligate the awarded funds, SMTD has created grant application FAIN 1187-2301-1.

Trustee McCarthy made a motion to execute the grant application be seconded by Trustee Davsko. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Consider Declaring Certain Equipment Surplus

Managing Director Steve Schoeffel explained when an asset has reached the end of its useful life benchmark (ULB), the Board must declare that asset as surplus to allow for final disposition. SMTD recently replaced four buses out of their useful life: Buses 802, 804, 1101, and 1107, with four CNG buses from New Flyer. SMTD has currently removed any reusable parts and plans to place these buses on IBID for auction. SMTD would like to declare three older shelters as surplus, Asset #543, #546, and #562 that are no longer in use, due to outdated repair parts. SMTD would also like to declare passenger shelter, Asset #1598, as surplus, due to a recent accident that rendered the shelter obsolete. SMTD will attempt to auction shelter #562 via IBID, and if unsold, then SMTD will scrap the pieces, along with the other shelters. SMTD requests to declare these items and equipment as surplus for final removal and disposition. There is no cash impact as the assets are fully depreciated, although revenue may be generated once auctioned.

Trustee Douglas made a motion to prepare equipment declared surplus for final disposition seconded by Trustee Davsko. The motion passed unanimously.


VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Retiree Sundree Lathon addressed the board regarding a personnel issue. Chairman Brewer asked that they discuss the matter after the meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Seeing no further business to come before the Board, Trustee Douglass made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Trustee Davsko. The meeting adjourned at 5:28 PM.

Approved:


Brian Brewer, Chairperson


Leslie McCarthy, Secretary