



WHITESTOWN ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT BOARD MEETING

November 8, 2023

2:00PM

Meeting Minutes

1. OPENING THE MEETING

A. Call to Order – 7:00PM

Roll Call:

Pete Anderson, President- Present

Kathryn Ems, Vice President- Absent

John Cumming- Present

Rob Worl- Absent

Nathan Messer- Present

Eric Nichols- Absent

Vacancy

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Election of Officers

Motion: Nathan Messer made a motion to nominate Pete Anderson President, seconded by John Cumming. Motion passed 3-0. (5:30) *

Motion: Nathan Messer made a motion to nominate John Cumming as Vice President, seconded by Pete Anderson. Motion passed 3-0. (5:54) *

Mr. Messer noted the Town Council would fill any vacant board positions in January and then the board would need to hold new elections of officers.

2. PRESENTATIONS

A. TransPro - Proposed route options for 2025

David Johnson with TransPro Consulting presented the Workforce Connectors Study for the Board, giving revised recommendations, reviewing the 2023-2024 budgets, and discussing next steps. Mr. Johnson recommended using a demand response service within the Economic Improvement District (EID). Customers can request trips using an app, website, or phone. He also said that a smaller vehicle would save costs including allowing the use of non-CDL drivers. Whitestown customers can request a stop at the Downtown Transit Center, Traders Point and/or within the EID. TransPro evaluated a connection to 38th Street & Lafayette,

which would be possible with one demand response vehicle. The cycle time between downtown and EID is too long to add additional downtown trips using only one vehicle. Mr. Johnson reviewed the revised service alternatives. The Base Recommendation was to maintain existing service hours with one smaller vehicle. The total cost was projected to be \$368,953 which was under the projected 2023 cost of \$432,076. The Two-Vehicle Alternative would maintain the existing services hours with one smaller vehicle and add a 2nd vehicle from 5-10AM to further improve travel time. That cost would be \$536,659.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the 2023 and 2024 budgets; The projected 2023 budget was \$484,24. CIRTAs was still contributing but some federal funds were one-time contributions and would run out. The projected 2024 Budget, which was the existing service with \$1 Fare, was \$444,551. The projected budget with \$0 fare would be \$452,072. He recommended the \$0 Fare and said it would have a minimal impact on overall costs, was affordable for customers and had the potential to increase ridership, even if the service did not change. This would be rolled out as a promotion in case there was a desire for a fee in the future.

John Cumming asked if the EID could be expanded over time as more businesses were added to the area. Nathan Messer said it would require state legislation to rebuild the EID which they hoped to have done next spring.

Mr. Cumming asked if the service was scalable. Mr. Johnson said scaling was easier with the traditional fixed route.

Next steps included the EID confirming the following:

- CIRTAs will extend the existing Royal contract for one year with no changes to the service (2024)
- EID and CIRTAs will enter into a one-year contract to ensure continuity of service and funding
- CIRTAs will enact a short-term suspension of the \$1 fare to increase ridership (marketed as a promotional fare) on January 2, 2024
- CIRTAs suggests implementing Wi-Fi services on the Whitestown Connector to enhance the overall customer experience
- A meeting with CIRTAs and TransPro to discuss longer-term service changes, which would begin in 2024 (along with re-procuring the operations contract)
- Meet with Whitestown staff to evaluate fleet procurement options for 2025 and beyond to further reduce operating costs. They should do a proper request for proposals. Another option was for the Town to acquire its own fleet.

Nathan Messer said they were looking at ways to improve these routes and increase ridership, which was still rebounding from the impact of COVID. He said by 2025 they may have enough revenue for the two-vehicle system if the demand was there, He said they should allocate funds for marketing and promoting the route.

3. PUBLIC REQUEST TO SPEAK

4. NEW BUSINESS

A. Approval of 2024 Budget

Nathan Messer said CIRTAs has indicated the 2024 budget would not exceed \$300,000. His recommendation was for \$300,000 and to add \$50,000 for marketing (mass mailings, job fairs, etc.) to promote the route change and local jobs.

Mr. Messner noted a question came in from the public asking about the possibility of running a route from Whitestown to Lily or jobs in Lebanon. He said the EID was paid for by businesses that are in it and was meant to bring workers in and not send them out elsewhere. Those other areas could create their own EID and Whitestown could possibly work with them.

There was a discussion among Board members about the cost and Mr. Messner explained the ARPA federal funds ran out which was why they needed a new solution for 2025. They could either pay the \$407,000 to keep the static route they had, reduce it to \$368,000 for one on-demand bus or pay \$536,000 for two buses. There was also a major increase in the program cost two years ago when they changed bus routes, which almost doubled the cost, but it was offset by the grants.

Motion: Nathan Messer made a motion to approve the 2024 budget for \$350,000, seconded by John Cumming. Motion passed 3-0. (57:18) *

B. Discuss 2024 contract with CIRTAs for the Whitestown Connector

Nathan Messer said the 2024 contract with CIRTAs was not drawn up yet. It would undergo legal review and then be presented for signatures. The contract for 2024 would be for a dollar amount for no fares to continue for Royal Transportation; and a separate contract for the service recommendations in 2025.

The minutes of this meeting will be presented to the Town Council to show they approved the budget of \$350,000. The Council then can sign off on the budget.

Motion: Nathan Messer made a motion to permit the President of the Board to approve the 2024 CIRTAs contract and to move forward with the on-demand option for 2025, pending legal review, seconded by John Cumming. Motion passed 3-0. (1:01:40) *

5. OTHER BUSINESS – None

6. ADJOURN

Motion: Nathan Messer made a motion to adjourn, seconded by John Cumming. Motion passed 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:03PM.

* Minute mark in videorecording where topic of discussion begins.

The minutes of the Economic Improvement Board (EIB) Meeting on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, are approved on this 6th day of August 2024, by the following EID members:

Pete Anderson, President

, Secretary