

Coralville City Council

Work Session

March 9, 2021

Via Electronic Meeting because a meeting in person is impossible or impractical due to concerns for the health and safety of Council members, staff, and the public presented by COVID-19

Present: Mayor John Lundell; Council Members Laurie Goodrich, Meghann Foster, Jill Dodds, Hai Huynh, Mitch Gross

Staff Present: City Administrator Kelly Hayworth, Assistant City Administrator Ellen Habel, City Attorney Kevin Olson, Director of Parking and Transportation Vicky Robrock, and Director of Finance Tony Roetlin

Others Present: Tim Oswald, Piper Sandler

Mayor Lundell opened the meeting at 7:25 pm.

1. Discussion of existing and proposed transit fare scenarios: Director of Parking and Transportation Vicky Robrock said the Iowa City Area Transit Study included a robust public input process with several types of opportunities for feedback. Robrock summarized the proposed fare structure, noting the cash fare is proposed to remain at \$1 and the youth fare will change from \$0.75 to \$0.50 and the eligible ages will be 5 to 18, which will match Iowa City. She said children under 5, disabled, and elderly will continue to ride for free. Robrock noted that social service agencies commented during the public input process that single ride tickets were not mutually honored by Iowa City and Coralville and that was a barrier for their clients, so that was corrected during this process, and after six months the two entities will review use and reconcile if necessary. She said social service agencies also requested a 10-ride pass, which was added, and the 20-ride pass was discontinued. She said there would be no changes to the 31-day adult pass, Kirkwood Community College pass, or University of Iowa passes, and the 31-day youth pass will now be discounted. Robrock noted that the study and proposed fares improved compatibility between the Coralville and Iowa City systems and should streamline use. She noted the consultants also recommended mobile ticketing and said the system's on-time performance has drastically improved with the implementation of new routes, which makes transfers more efficient. There was discussion among the council and staff regarding transfer passes and service to West High, as well as the federal rules governing it. Robrock said the next step to change the fares is a public hearing, and that Iowa City would like to implement their new schedules and routes in August, with fare changes prior to that. There was additional discussion regarding discounted passes and the overall costs of operating transit.
2. TIF Report—Tim Oswald of Piper Sandler: Tim Oswald provided a TIF report, including bonds outstanding, obligations, refinancings, rent and other income, and ending balances, for the Oakdale, 12th Avenue, and Mall TIF areas. City Administrator Kelly Hayworth added that

many people anticipate COVID-19 to have a negative impact on property taxes in the coming years, particularly on commercial properties.

At this time Oswald left the meeting.

3. Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Discussion: Hayworth said staff continues to watch the FY21 budget very carefully, and the third hotel/motel tax payment was received and is \$200,000 higher than originally anticipated. On the other hand, Hayworth said, the SEATS contract is \$100,000 over what was anticipated, resulting from the decrease in ridership in Iowa City and a higher cost per hour because the part-time drivers were laid off.
4. City Administrator's Time: Hayworth reported on the following:
 - Numbers from the new federal COVID bill were available today and they include a rural transit and paratransit amount. Hayworth said he did not know whether that may include funds for SEATS. He noted that if not for the previous COVID funding, the City's subsidy to Transit for the coming year would be \$900,000, and is typically \$600,000. He said ridership is at 50% of normal and is a long-term issue, and with students and many employees working from home, they are not riding transit. He said ridership has been declining here and across the country for six years and is down on Cambus, as well, which is free, so the fare isn't the issue.
 - The estimate for Coralville in the new federal COVID bill is \$3 million, and the funding is very flexible, so it can cover lost revenues or expenses. Hayworth added that Iowa City was allocated \$17 million, Johnson County was allocated \$29 million, and the state was allocated \$1.3 billion. He noted there are also additional funds for rental assistance, utility bills, and mortgage assistance.
 - Kevin Olson will report on TNR in a future meeting.

Adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Notes taken by Ellen Habel, Assistant City Administrator