

FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING

**Monday, May 19, 2014
5:30 PM**

**Morton Middle School
1135 North Main Street
Fall River, MA 02720**

AGENDA

Discussion:

- Bus Contracts
- Review of Transportation Policy

MINUTES

At 5:45 PM Mr. Paul Hart, Chair of the subcommittee, read the Open Meeting Law.

A roll call for attendance showed that Mr. Hart and Mr. Maynard were present. Mr. Costa was absent. Also present were Superintendent Mayo-Brown, Mr. Tom Coogan, Mrs. Panchley, and a member of the press.

1. Bus Contracts

Mr. Coogan explained that they had two separate bids that went out. One was a formal RFP that was executed through the procurement office. Mr. McCoy's office handled the bidding for the special education transportation as well. He explained the process and noted that the first thing they do is check to make sure the companies meet the minimum requirements that they would need to do service with them and then they evaluate, rank, and score the companies based on their proposals and track record. Once that is done, they then get the price information and compare the routes and the cost of those routes. One of the things they have done over the years is to divide the services into different sections so that they can bid on part or all of the business. This year they went out for a five-year contract for both which they thought was in their best interest in trying to obtain the best price as well as to provide some cost certainty for the district.

Mr. Coogan said there were three companies that bid on the regular education services and of those companies, Fisher scored the highest because of their experience and track record with FRPS. The next two were Amaral and Tremblay's. They take into account the areas that they bid on and put a price in for each of the services that they bid on. Fisher put in a limited bid for certain schools and services and the other two companies put in more comprehensive bids for all services. There was a 15-18% increase in the dollar value in the contracts for regular education services. He said he would send out a spreadsheet which would show the different companies and the recommendations for each area of the bid. He also said he would be looking for the Committee to recommend those contracts to the full Committee for adoption at the June meeting.

Mr. Maynard asked who the lowest bidder was.

Mr. Coogan said Fisher was the lowest bidder for much of the van services and the other sections were between both Amaral and Tremblay's which will show in the spreadsheet.

Mr. Maynard asked how many buses in total.

Mr. Coogan said between regular and special education there are approximately 80-85 buses in the district on a daily basis including Henry Lord which they have put a placeholder in for three additional buses and accounts for some of the increase he mentioned earlier. He added that they control the buses and the routes and may be able to scale back based on the numbers.

Mr. Hart said it is clear that the special education buses cost a significant amount more than the regular education services. He asked about some of the longer routes and asked if it costs the district more money.

Mr. Coogan explained some of the different routes and how they are established and said they try to get the most efficient routes possible.

Mr. Hart said there were no other questions and asked Mr. Coogan to move on to the special education busing.

Mr. Coogan shared copies of the bid with the subcommittee and explained that the five potential bidders are across the top of the page and the low price is highlighted in yellow. He explained a little more about the set-up of that document. He then handed out another document and explained that one as well. They can see the number of bids submitted and he highlighted the lowest price which is carried over so that they can see it more clearly. For purposes of helping the Committee evaluate it, he used the same format on the other sheet which has a calculation of the percentage difference in the rate from one year to the next so that they can see if there is a significant change. He went over some of the percentage changes that were listed. He noted that the bids are for a vehicle, driver, and a monitor and some of the increases are if they were to have an additional monitor based on student need.

Mr. Hart asked if those monitors were there last year.

Mr. Coogan said they always include a monitor with the bus; however, in some cases, there may be a need for an additional monitor on a bus. If that is the case, they have already obtained the pricing for an additional monitor. They do not incur the price if they do not use an additional monitor.

Mr. Maynard felt the monitor is necessary.

Mr. Coogan agreed and said they always plan for at least one but have the pricing in case another is needed.

Mr. Coogan then presented the last document which was the winning bid multiplied by the number of vehicles they use and the number of days in a school year to project a dollar amount for that particular route for the year. The last page lists the comprehensive number for the special needs bid plus the number carried over for the regular education bid which gives them a grand total (as they project it currently).

Mr. Coogan continued that he wanted to talk about a number that was very volatile this year. At their high point last year, they had 21 or 22 McKinney-Vento vehicles. The average for the year was 14-15 vehicles on any given day.

Transcriber's Note: Mr. Costa entered the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Mr. Coogan continued that this year at their high point, they did up into the 40s for the number of vehicles for McKinney-Vento transportation. In addition, the average was in the low to mid 30s. For a place holder for this upcoming year, they used a number of 35 vehicles. They can add or subtract vehicles as needed. To explain the fluidity of it, he noted that at the end of April, they had a total of 29 vehicles and last week they had 8 McKinney-Vento students registered that day for new transportation which could be an additional 2-3 vans.

Mr. Hart asked how much more (roughly) McKinney-Vento adds to the budget each year.

Mr. Coogan said it is a different number to try to calculate. In past years, it was in the \$100K-\$200K range and in this past year they saw it spike to about \$300K and they are projecting for this upcoming year to be around \$500K-\$600K. It has gone up exponentially over the past few years with no prediction.

Mr. Hart asked about the total on the handout.

Mr. Coogan said on the final page, they see a number for this bid brought down to a total of \$6,950,000 for special education transportation and regular education services are just under \$1.2M. The total of the two forecasted numbers is \$8,126,932. He added that there is a little bit of movement as they use more or less vehicles but they feel that is a conservative projection.

Mr. Hart asked how it compared to last year.

Mr. Coogan said they are anticipating ending up around \$7.2M. He noted that the number does include additional vehicles for the new Henry Lord. They have an increase in rates and an increase in vehicles but they anticipate in 2-3 years the number of vehicles dropping as the boundaries shift.

Mr. Hart asked about single and double runs.

Mr. Coogan explained that in some situations, they have adjusted start times so that a bus can make one run and then make another run for another school. By combining the routes, they get a lower price and use the same vehicle for two routes which offers cost efficiency for the carrier and the district.

Mr. Hart asked Mr. Coogan for his recommendation.

Mr. Coogan said they have applied the technical evaluation first and followed the Committee's guidelines. There was scoring criteria put out and in some cases some companies scored better than others in certain areas which are reflected in the technical scores. However, when it comes down to a situation where they have similar scored bidders on a technical aspect, then price carries. In most of the cases, they can see that price is the determining factor.

Mr. Maynard asked if they needed a motion to accept.

Mr. Hart said it was not just to accept but also, the contract is for a period from 2014-2018.

Mr. Coogan said the bid was collected this year (2013-14) but it is for the years FY15, FY16, FY17, FY18, and FY19.

MOTION: Mr. Maynard – Mr. Costa: To accept and recommend to the full body.		
All were in favor	None opposed	Motion Passed

2. Review of the transportation policy

Mr. Coogan distinguished the difference between a policy and a procedure. He handed out a copy of the policy for student transportation that the Committee has approved. He wanted to go through some changes in the protocol that they have made by tightening the language around the exchange between adults when students are released either at the stop or at their home.

Mr. Coogan went over the protocol changes on the handout which included regular education and special education students.

Mr. Hart asked if they will release to an adult who is waving through a window.

Mr. Coogan said in the case of the bus stop, they have to come to the bus stop to receive the child. If an adult is not present, the child is returned on the bus.

Mr. Hart asked for a door to door instance and the designated adult is waving through the window; if that was considered a “hand to hand”.

Mr. Coogan said what they are asking for is a confirmed adult to adult exchange. There does not need to be physical contact but there needs to be at least an acknowledgement. He noted that is where there was a breakdown in the last incident.

Mr. Hart asked about a scenario, like the last incident, where it happens multiple times with the parent not being there or calling the school. He asked what happens after the three times and if it is being enforced.

Mr. Coogan said that is mentioned at the bottom of the page. If a child is returned multiple times, after three strikes, the child will be transported to the police station where there is a protocol for them to notify DSS that the parent has been potentially neglectful.

Mr. Hart asked if DSS is contacted before or after the three strikes.

Mr. Coogan explained that on the third instance, the parent is notified that the next time the child is returned, they will enforce the protocol. In the last situation, the school did not notify transportation on each instance when it was occurring so transportation was not aware of the frequency and as a result things got out of hand while trying to accommodate that family. Now, transportation is automatically notified by the bus company and the school is notified as well so that all three offices are in concert. If they exceed those three instances, then the authorities are notified.

Mr. Hart asked if bus companies are allowed to charge the school department extra if their routes are not completed in time due to parents not being home to receive their children which causes delays.

Mr. Coogan said they charge by the route or day and they do not get charged extra for that. If it gets to be a situation where a route gets longer and longer then they have to add more buses which gets more costly.

Mr. Maynard asked if the driver takes the child home and the parent is consistently not there, can they refuse to transport that child.

Mr. Coogan said they could potentially discontinue services. Their mission is to try to complete the service; however, if there is a situation where it is constantly breaking down, then other arrangements have to be made. The School Department would make the decision, not the bus company.

Mr. Maynard thanked Mr. Coogan for the revisions.

MOTION: Mr. Maynard – Mr. Costa: To close the Public Hearing.

All were in favor

None opposed

Meeting adjourned at 6:16 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Interim Administrative Assistant for
School Committee Services

Please note: A videotape/DVD of this meeting is on file in the School Committee Office and is available for review by contacting the Interim Administrative Assistant for School Committee Services.