

**Coventry Board of Education  
Coventry, CT  
Transportation Committee-Unapproved Minutes  
Meeting of Wednesday, January 21, 2009**

Members Present: Cheryl Trudon, Transportation Committee Chairman  
John Barrett

Members Absent: Kathleen Ryan

Administrators Present: Sherry Holmes, Fiscal Services Director  
Judith Richard, Director of Pupil Services

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:38 pm by S. Holmes.

**II. Audience of Citizens**

There was none.

**III. Transportation Bid Presentation and possible recommendation**

S. Holmes said she will present the regular education transportation bid. She said J. Richard will present the special education transportation bid.

S. Holmes said that bidders were asked to submit bids on Option 1-Contractor Provided Diesel.

S. Holmes said that two bids were received. One bid was from M & J Bus, Inc. The second bid was from First Student.

M & J Bus, Inc. bid \$292.55 per bus per day for Option 1 for the 2009-10 School Year. First Student bid \$324.72 per bus per day for Option 1 for the 2009-10 School Year. Both vendors bid on 20 conventional buses for 182 days.

S. Holmes said the Option 1 transportation budget amount for Coventry Public Schools for 2009-10, using M & J Bus, Inc is \$1,064,882.00, while for First Student is \$1,181,980.80. S. Holmes said alternate prices may be added if the district requires a newer fleet of buses. She said alternate pricing is \$67/bus per day for M & J Bus, Inc. and \$42.06/bus per day for First Student. S. Holmes said that if the current fleet of buses were used, the additional alternate pricing would not be added to the bottom line. J. Barrett asked which current fleet of buses we would use. S. Holmes said the current fleet is the one that First Student is using right now. J. Barrett asked if the current fleet responsibility would be transferred from First Student to M & J, should we choose M & J. S. Holmes said yes.

S. Holmes explained additional performance bond prices of \$14,000 for M & J Bus, Inc. and \$6,495.50 for First Student. M & J would deduct \$32,400 from the budget amount if Coventry used its own

facility location. First Student did not provide an exact figure to deduct from the budget amount for Coventry using its own facility location.

S. Holmes said M & J Bus, Inc. does not provide a pre-payment discount. She said First Student would provide a pre-payment discount of ½%.

S. Holmes explained the Option 2 spreadsheet which is for District Provided Diesel. She said the bid for 2009-10 regular day transportation per bus per day for M & J Bus, Inc is \$257.57. She said First Student's bid is \$284.30.

S. Holmes said that comparing Option 1 vs. Option 2, Option 1 is a higher rate per bus per day for both vendors.

There was a discussion about the cost of diesel. S. Holmes said the budget amount for 2007-08 for diesel was \$95,000 and 2008-09 was \$165,000. In 2006-07 Coventry spent \$138,000 on diesel. S. Holmes said the cap amount used by the bus companies would be \$3.00/gallon. C. Trudon subtracted \$165,000 from M& J's bid of \$1,064,882 rounded to \$1,065,000 and came up with an estimate of \$900,000.

S. Holmes explained her third worksheet comparing M & J Busing vs. First Student bids, using district provided fuel. M & J Bus, Inc.'s bid of \$955,436.40 was \$91,955.40 less than First Student's bid of \$1,047,391.80. M & J's Late Run Charge is \$.54 higher than First Student. S. Holmes said athletic bus rates for waiting hour and minimum cost per trip were higher for M& J than for First Student. She said alternate prices for fleet compliance and performance bond were higher for M & J than First Student. She said First Student would provide a new fleet of buses. She said that M & J would provide a savings of \$32,400 for facility location change although First Student did not indicate an amount of savings realized. C. Trudon asked about the current bus drivers. S. Holmes said the bus drivers and the transportation coordinator would be offered contracts with whoever gets the bid.

C. Trudon asked the definition of minimum trip. S. Holmes said the majority of the minimum trips are athletic and some are activity related. C. Trudon asked the definition of cost per waiting hour. S. Holmes said that cost per waiting hour is the bus driver's waiting time for the athletic event to end.

There was a discussion of future location changes for the bus yard, possibly at the public works building.

J. Barrett asked about late buses. He asked how many late buses there are. S. Holmes said there are four buses, two times a week. He asked what our current transportation budget for 2008-09 is. S. Holmes said the budget for regular transportation plus late buses for 2008-09 is \$1,552,848. J. Barrett compared the Option 2 budget amount for First Student at \$1,034,852 and said they are bidding one half a million dollars lower for 2009-10. J. Barrett asked if we are saving \$500,000 this year, why can't we offer late buses 5 days a week, especially for the high school and middle schools.

There was a discussion about late buses and how it would affect the budget. J. Barrett said parents think late buses are a positive thing. C. Trudon said it can be brought to the Board of Education. J. Barrett

said that if children are rewarded for being involved in a planned after school activity, then we should offer late buses.

S. Holmes recommends M & J Bus, Inc. in these hard economic times.

There was a discussion regarding First Student's maintenance procedures and the bus coordinator not being available at her office because she was out driving buses.

Judith Richard presented the special education transportation bids. There were bids from EASTCONN and M & J. J. Richards said EASTCONN provided bids on every child's address, per van per day. She said

M & J provided a flat rate of \$185.92 per van per day with district provided diesel. She said the average cost of EASTCONN was \$139 per van per day, with contractor provided fuel.

There was a discussion about re-pricing the individual address trips for EASTCONN. Judith asked EASTCONN to re-price and reduced the special education transportation costs by \$103,000. She said EASTCONN issues credits if the child changes addresses.

J. Barrett said there are people moving in and out of the town. He said the EASTCONN bid has the possibility to increase.

There was a discussion about the cost of fuel. EASTCONN has a surcharge on fuel, if there are any unforeseen extraordinary increases in fuel.

J. Richard said the EASTCONN bid is a one year bid for the year 2009-10.

There was a discussion regarding combining runs and using two companies to handle all the special education runs. There was a discussion about the cost of diesel. There is a \$3.00/gallon cap on fuel by M & J if they provide the fuel.

C. Trudon's recommendation for 2009-10 to Coventry BOE is to use EASTCONN for special education transportation for 1 year and a five year contract with M & J for regular education transportation, with district provided diesel (Option 2). The committee agreed on C. Trudon's recommendation.

J. Barrett asks about proposing to the Board of Education late buses 5 days a week.

#### **IV. Approve December 8, 2008 Transportation Meeting Minutes**

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of December 8, 2008

By: J. Barrett      Seconded: C. Trudon

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.