



West Ada

SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

June 23, 2014

Date, Place & Time	A special meeting of the Board of Trustees, Joint School District No. 2, convened on Monday, June 23, 2014, 5:30 p.m., at the District Service Center, 1303 E. Central Drive, Meridian, Idaho
Trustees in Attendance	Chairman Anne Ritter, Janet Calinsky, Carol Sayles, Mike Vuittonet
Trustee Excused	Tina Dean
Staff in Attendance	Dr. Linda Clark, Dr. Bruce Gestrin, Trish Duncan, Eric Exline, Alex Simpson, Mike Carrithers
Guests	David Priest, Lorna Patterson, Don Weatherhead, Shari Setten, Noel Randel, Victoria Vincent, Cathy Hull, Christy D., Jonna Huff, Diana Salzman, Peter Donovan, Gary Hill, Michelle Barnes, Brandie Maestes, Joseph Strong, Kristy M., Derek Canode, Cristobal Vega, Willam B. Jennings, Carol M. Junker, Frank Junker, Kathryn Nelson, Eric Anderson, Vance Batteen, Steve Holz, Alvin Setter, Ron Bruchine, Gary Booher, Corey Heaps, Mike Molk, Paul D. Pedrosa, Betty Duff, Al Tortorella, Chris Anderson, Karen Sneed, Dale Sneed, Luke Franklin, David Frost, Cathy Schwandt, Elby Jones, Judy Cook, Tracie Massey, Cori General, Layne Saxton, Denise Fonner, Linda Wood, JoAnne Tackett, Debora Danwy, Steve Newcomer, shane Duncan, Denise Nielsen, Martha Goff, Danny Bade, Rhonda Koch, Jennifer Cook, Bernice Cooper, Lynd Learsch, Bob Learsch, Dirk Soderling, Maureen Taylor, Tiffanie Newcomer, Bunny Malmin, Deloris Harpt, Glen Elliott, Tina Shaklee, Terry Crofts, Geoff Latshaell, Michael Rohm, Sue Darden, Ann Lovelace, James Lysk, Monique Shaklee, Marc Santoro, Kendra Wisenbaker, Nancy Taylor, Susana Alvarado, Sue Anne Smith, Jim Borglund, Steven Morton, Scott Kerr, Laureen Strong, Brenda Hardinger, Michael Gatay, Gene Oran, Frances Blados, Wade Spradley, Terry Grand, Don Rex, Janice Wilson, Ed Wilson, Rich Stewart

CALL TO ORDER Chairman Ritter

Discussion/Action

Hearing to Discuss Contracting Transportation Services to an Outside Vendor
Chairman Ritter stated questions posed by transportation employees would be addressed as part of the agenda. The board will hear four presentations from district employees and then will open the floor for public comment.

Dr. Bruce Gestrin reviewed the goals established by the district as they looked at the possibility of contracting transportation services to an outside vendor.

- To improve jobs for our staff by increasing the number of hours they work. Ongoing cuts to funding have caused the district to eliminate mid-day kindergarten busing, eliminate and streamline several hundred bus routes and thousands of bus stops. The effect of these issues have reduced the number of hours drivers could work each day and the income staff can make for the work they do.
- To provide staff with more career opportunities. Larger companies have multiple locations and opportunities for staff to find career opportunities that are not available currently.
- To update the bus fleet. Cost reductions have also resulted in the district cutting back on the replacement of the aging bus fleet, the mechanics do the very best job to keep the fleet on the road and running safely.
- To meet these goals within our current level of funding.

The staff is an important part of the process. The contractor will hire our drivers, mechanics, dispatchers, routers and supervisors. They will need the trained staff to run the system effectively.

Mike Carrithers – reviewed the RFP process. Data was gathered from route systems and he identified the number of routes. As required by state code, 11-12 vendors received the packets which included pricing for two years costs on routes, mid-day kindergarten busing, fuel costs, workers compensations costs, and the replacement of buses. Savings were figured at \$15 million over five years.

Alex Simpson – provided information on the low bidder. He reviewed financials and calls were placed to five references, three were very happy and felt the company was very easy to work with. One company was lukewarm about the company, felt they were knowledgeable and nice but it took some time to reconcile the billing. They didn't work well with the lead manager. The largest district the company currently serves is half the size of our district. The main office of the company is in New Jersey.

Eric Exline – reviewed questions posed by the transportation employees:

- Is fuel included in bid price?
No, the RFP is structured this to reduce cost by taking assets we have. Owning our buses in year one would save money on contract. Estimated savings includes the cost of fuel and our routing software and repeater.
- Dissatisfaction with length of work day-
Current staff does a great job. The circumstances of funding has put the district in a tough position. Working for four hours a day does not allow someone to make a living wage. Drivers and supervisors have been called on to run double routs. A system is needed to make enough of a wage that is a job.
- Changes in route bus schedule-

The plan is reduce 30 additional routes but will it be enough to make a difference. The board would have to decide. Eliminating routes will bring more hours for drivers and having the mid-day kindergarten would help more with full day employment.

- Will the management be similar?
Checked the RFP and the management structure appears to be identical in structure and number. The only difference is one assistant manager. Employees will be interviewed and given priority in hiring process. Around 80% of the current staff will be rehired, others typically don't want to make transitions.
- Salary and benefit package –
The vendor is proposing to incorporate a significant pay increase. Will raise the starting wage about a \$1.00 and the top rate about \$1.50. They offer more in salaries than benefits which are optional for their employees. Insurance costs are \$598 per month.
- Retirement –
They offer a 401 K program. The value of their PERSI accounts will stay intact until 65.
- Is the bus fleet too old and what is the replacement cost?
Yes, the equipment is old and the cost to replace would be near \$10.7 million.
- Collaboration between routers and drivers – make sure the best route is developed between the real thing and computer. Will continue to happen to run the right kinds of routes.
- Maintenance – three companies walked through impressed by cleanliness and that workers were on task.
- Actual hours worked are different than on RFP – the bid was based on four hour routes and on minutes from door to door. Not comparing apples to apples.
- Top hundred school districts – in five to six years will bypass Portland. Did not find anyone that was not contracting.

Trustee Vuittonet asked to confirm that the RFP was written so if the first year is a disaster we can pull out of the contract and retain the buses and facility. Mr. Carrithers established the district can terminate without cause anytime within the five year contract. The biggest replacement period for buses would be in the fourth year of the contract.

Trustee Sayles asked what would happen to buses that are no longer in service. The district would sell off for parts.

Trustee Calinsky requested more information about wages and opportunities. Current drivers will be first priority in the hiring process and tenure will count. There are opportunities for advancement in the much larger system.

Chairman Ritter asked what the interface between the district and the company would be. They will have a region manager who will be the main contact with district staff. The district will hire a liaison to manage the contractual issues from the DSC. Day to day operations will be the same.

Trustee Vuittonet asked what number of employees were vested and how many would be affected by the change from PERSI to a 401K. Approximately 177 current employees are vested.

Trustee Vuittonet continued with a question regarding the cost of replacing buses if we stayed with the current system. The district would have to spend \$10.7 million to bring the fleet up to date. Those costs are already calculated in the proposal. The district would have to spend \$2.6 million from the capital budget each year for the next four years to buy the buses needed.

Chairman Ritter opened the floor to public testimony at 6:45 p.m.

Michael Rohm – the drivers, mechanics and others have the best interests of the district in mind also. They are not asking the district to spend half again the money that what was laid out. There are a number of people in the district that have put numbers together, they have targeted a single area and will speak to that.

SueAnne Smith – has also calculated the costs of the proposal and does not agree with what the district has proposed. Her numbers show a savings and the feeling is the district needs to look at their numbers again. Next year's tiering will make longer routes, which in turn gives drivers more hours and they will be able to keep more drivers on staff.

Brenda Hardinger – an employee, home owner, tax payer who loves her job driving. Parents give the responsibility of driving their children to the district and trust them with their wellbeing. This isn't just a job, she came for the benefits but loves the children and wants to stay as a district employee.

Ane Lovelace – the drivers touch the families in a personal way, they get to know the students and care about them. The private company wouldn't be the same and working for them would make their future questionable.

Michael Barnes – works with special need students and expressed the need for continuity to help these students start their day out right. You cannot replace skilled drivers with money. They provide a human quality, love and compassion. The district should consider the aftermath of going to a private contractor.

Delores Harpt – has worked for the district for forty years. It is a much better place to work than for privately owned companies like Twin Falls and Boise. Since employees received the letter regarding the change, drivers have left feeling they will not be able to make payments and put food on the table. She feels this was very poorly handled, what will happen to staff and drivers when they expect them to work for a company that doesn't supply the nice perks they have now. Keep the department the way it is now.

Bob Learsch – is a 13 year driver. The San Diego school district fired their contractor in 2010 and went back to their own busing. In two years they saved a million dollars over the private contractor. In Clark County, money to replace buses is repaid by the state at 85%. The tax payers will be upset that we are selling out to a private company. Contractors don't buy local and businesses will suffer.

Layne Saxton – take time and make careful decision. Comparing to Boise, they haul half the kids that Meridian does. They are urban and Meridian is rural. This is simple mathematics and they are missing the point. The depreciation money from the state has not been going back to the fleet and that is where the problem is. The system is broken but don't fix it on the backs of the employees. There are ways to save money on workers comp and get the price down. Transportation is a high risk area, don't make the decision hastily.

Don Weatherhead – asked the board to give SueAnne a chance to do the figures with the information the district used. He knows they can do it for less. If the rumor is true that First Student does not hire assistants, they will lose 45-50 more employees.

Scott Hale – new MEA president, once you give away control to outside companies, there is a worry that the new company will be less effective. The association would like to be helpful in finding good long term solutions.

Noel Randel – shared a poem written by a previous transportation employee.

The public hearing was closed at 7:32 p.m.

Trustee Calinsky thanked everyone for coming and their heartfelt comments. She appreciated what they said and she has additional questions that will need to be answered. Whatever is decided, the board does not take these things lightly, and cuts from the state have affected every department.

Trustee Sayles – reiterated what Trustee Calinsky said. If they were not given benefits, would they retire or look for another job? People that work for benefits would leave. She is hearing they would like for the board to wait and give them a chance to do better. She would entertain that idea, they could bid next year if they cannot come up with savings.

Trustee Vuittonet – understands what is at stake, has questions about how this will affect the employees. He knows the issue is time sensitive but would like the numbers vetted and time to ask questions. He will take into consideration what was said tonight.

Trustee Vuittonet moved, Trustee Calinsky seconded a motion to postpone a decision on contracting transportation services to an outside

vendor, and to set a special meeting for Wednesday, June 25, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. to act on the administrative proposal. Trustee Vuittonet voted yes, Trustee Calinsky voted yes and Trustee Sayles voted no.

ADJOURNMENT

Trustee Vuittonet moved, Trustee Calinsky seconded and the vote was unanimous to adjourn the meeting at 7:48 p.m.

Chairman

Clerk