

**MINUTES  
TOWN OF CONCORD  
CITIZENS TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, June 21, 2012  
7:00 PM-9:30 PM  
Clock Tower Room  
Harvey Wheeler Community Center**

**Present:** Lisa Bergen, presiding  
Louise Haldeman  
Mark Hanson  
Kate Damon  
Ray Bruttomesso

**Absent:** Abraham Fisher, Rick Anderson

**Citizens Present:** Phil Benincasa, Ray Hanselman, Carmen Reis who brought a visitor from Cambodia

**1. Call to order:**

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 by Chair, Lisa Bergen.

**2. Correspondence:**

Ms. Bergen reported that she had received a note from Mr. Mathew Knight, who had attended an earlier meeting saying that he had enjoyed the experience and learned a great deal.

**3. The minutes:** The minutes of the June 7<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved.

**4. Chairs Report:** postponed

**5. Citizens Comments:** None

**6. Reports and Issues for Discussion:**

a. *Dates for forum (hearings) and presentations for school committee:* The charge for the CTC asks for at least one and possibly two hearings. Discussion centered on when the hearings would be most effective both in reaching an audience and in being able to present plentiful information to the public. It was decided that as the committee will be preparing a report, the first hearing could take the form of a preliminary presentation of the report perhaps as early as the August 16 meeting in order to hear from the public and to see if there are matters that have not been addressed. The second and final hearing should be in early September possibly Sept 13 by which time the final report, which would be presented to the school committee, would be complete but there would still be time for revisions.

b. *Rescheduling of July 5 meeting:* As it appeared that many members were planning to be away, it was decided to move the meeting to Monday July 9. Ms. Bergen will see if the meeting can be held in its usual location.

c. *Discussion of final report content and format:* It was suggested that the final report be divided into 6 sections covering safety, social factors (intangibles), level of service, cost analysis, and potential sites. There will be an introductory section outlining the bus system, as it now exists. A draft will be presented at the first of the hearings mentioned above and based on questions which may arise at that hearing further revisions may be done. It was suggested that the excellent report done by the solar site committee would serve as a good model.

d. *Committee members reports on assigned action items and additional research*

*Safety-* Mr. Bruttomesso reported that he is looking into the role the school buses play in the Town's emergency planning formerly called civil defense. While parts of the plan have not been updated, there have been occasions where buses have been used as standby's when there was a possibility of a need to evacuate of residents or hospital patients in the case of fire. He plans to consult further with the Concord Fire Chief as to details and will forward the information to the chair.

Mr. Hanson and Ms. Bergen watched the process of loading and unloading of the school buses on one of the last days of the school year at Willard, Peabody and CCHS. They stressed the very high priority given to safety by the transportation department but noticed that bus drivers often have to cope with obstacles such as illegally

parked cars and private drivers getting into the way. They hoped that the design of the new high school would separate the bus loading areas from the rest of the traffic for safety reasons.

Mr. Hanson plans to continue meeting with the safety officer to clarify further the safety statistics. He will join with Mr. Bruttomesso in working on related issues.

*Costs Analysis:* Mr. Hanson intends to do more research into the comparison of costs between outsourced systems and in-house ones looking at factors such as bus routes, number of students per bus, extra trips and costs of buses. He noted that a nearby town which runs its own system, leases its buses rather than owning them and outsources maintenance but pays a premium for 24 hour service for bus repair.

Ms. Damon noted that it was proving difficult to get estimates on buildings without more site information. Mr. Bruttomesso and Ms. Damon will work together to identify some three basic site profiles for use in getting building estimates. They will also do an analysis of some of the sites being considered to see what the costs would be of adapting those sites for bus storage. What kinds of structures could be accommodated on site? What additional costs would be incurred to connect utilities? Could a given site accommodate the other vehicles the school owns?

*Social costs (Intangibles):* Ms. Haldeman reported that the sense of "ownership", familiarity with the drivers, connections within the community etc., are always important to the maintenance of confidence in the bus system. Communities which have long time relationships with a single bus company seem to have established this same degree of confidence but important factors are having an on-site manager who can address questions and concerns quickly and has the authority to do so. Having the buses nearby so that the buses do not have a long commute before they can start their rounds is very important to keeping routes on time. At least one nearby Town has found it expedient to design their own routes. Small companies also appear more likely to have a stable work force and smaller communities have less moving around of students during the school year than do larger cities. Stability, proximity, and a degree of local control would this be important factors to consider when outsourcing.

*Identify areas still to be researched:* Connected to both costs and social factors is the question of employee investment. As employees of the system, the drivers are part of it and have demonstrated a strong commitment to the quality of the service. If the schools outsource what will happen to the drivers? What obligations will the Town continue to have towards the drivers who would no longer be employees of the Town but who may have accrued some pension benefits? What would be the employment opportunities for the drivers? Presumably, experienced drivers such as ours would be in high demand but more information about payment and benefits needs to be obtained.

## **7. Action Items**

*Designate areas of report preparation to committee members as appropriate:*

Ms. Damon and Mr. Bruttomesso will continue to work on getting estimates for structures.

Mr. Hanson and Mr. Anderson will continue to work on safety also developing tables etc.

Mr. Hanson, Mr. Anderson and Ms. Bergen will continue to work on establishing baseline costs for comparison purposes.

Mr. Fisher (presumably) and Ms. Haldeman will attempt to codify the social factors.

Ms. Bergen will do further research on comparative salary and benefits.

Ms. Haldeman will work on an introduction to the report showing the bus system as it now operates.

The overall purpose of the report will be to give the community solutions which will allow the buses to continue to be operated by the school system but will also show all the factors which must be involved in the decision.

## **8. Citizen's Comments: None**

## **9. Adjournment**

The committee adjourned at 9:25 by unanimous consent.

Respectfully submitted,

Louise S. Haldeman, Clerk