

Concord & Concord-Carlisle School Transportation Information Timeline

June 2011

Building Committee chooses site for new high school

School Committees, School Administration and Building Committee are aware that the site they have chosen will cause the loss of the transportation depot, tennis courts and JV fields. However, this is not included in public presentations and no effort to fund replacements is made.

July 28, 2011

Flahive Consulting Group submits proposal (and is ultimately hired) to “assist in transitioning to a vendor provided school transportation service.” (see ConcordBidDocsJulyAugust2011.pdf)

August 30, 2011

Transpar submits proposal to review transportation options. (see ConcordBidDocsJulyAugust2011.pdf)

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Vote to approve retaining a transportation consultant not to exceed \$10,000. A motion was made by Mr. Wedge seconded by Mr. Salemy that the CCSC vote to approve retaining a transportation consultant not to exceed \$10,000. A motion was made by Mr. Wedge seconded by Mr. Fondriest that the CSC vote to approve retaining a transportation consultant not to exceed \$10,000. The motions were unanimously approved.

<http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/minutes/2011/2011-08-30-JT.pdf>

Ms. Cynthia Sorn from The Carlisle Mosquito asked what the transportation consultant was for. Mr. Flaherty stated there will be some impacts of the new CCHS building project to the site so the district needs to find out how they will handle transportation in the future.

<http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/minutes/2011/2011-08-30-JT>

It is important to note that Mr. Flaherty knew prior to the meeting that the cost for a full evaluation (Transpar) exceeded the motion amount, thus reducing the ‘eligible’ bidders to one; Flahive Consulting.

September 13, 2011

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Ms. Rigby recognized the Transportation Department and all the bus drivers. Special recognition to Wayne Busa, John Arena and Norma Atkinson for their excellent customer service.

<http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/minutes/2011/2011-09-13-CPS.pdf>

September 15, 2011

Concord Financial Committee Meeting Minutes

Q Mr. Blair – Will the bus depot be replaced?

A Mr. Flaherty – The old depot is adequate for now.

http://concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA_FinComMin/2011Minutes/2011%2009%2015.doc

September 29, 2011

Concord Financial Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Piper said “Telling the public that all of the \$70,000,000 in renovations would have been paid for by Concord was not factual when the decision to build new vs. renovate was made, although it is now true because the MSBA has approved a new building and not a renovation.”

http://concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA_FinComMin/2011Minutes/2011%2009%2029.doc

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October 2011

Update (Building Committee)

"Existing programs are being preserved"

http://www.cchsbuilding.org/pb/documents/docs/October_2011_Update.pdf

October 5, 2011

School Administrators inform transportation staff that outsourcing is being pursued.
(Reported by transportation staff.)

October 20, 2011

Patch.com Article

First public notice about the transportation issue. John Flaherty is quoted as saying "the district has retained the services of a consultant charged with looking into the possibility of outsourcing busing services." He also said "Though open to the possibility of relocating the Transportation Department, the district is no longer actively looking for a potential site."

<http://concord.patch.com/articles/school-district-looking-into-privatized-busing-services>

October 25, 2011

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Fischelis stated that the Concord Journal contacted him about transportation issues at the high school.

<http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/minutes/2011/2011-10-25-JT.pdf>

October 28, 2011

Concord Journal Article

Peter Fischelis quoted as saying "We hired an expert to look at all the options available to us. "And when we make a decision we look at all of the factors. This is a separate issue and it will be evaluated on its own. We have options to keep the busing in-house or to outsource and it makes sense to evaluate them all before any decisions are made".

Superintendent Rigby quoted as saying "the Transportation Department, works off a \$1.25 million operating budget."

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/concord/features/x1769239521/Concord-school-districts-hire-consultant-to-report-on-transportation-options#axzz20hSwwRWP>

October 31, 2011

IFB for outsourcing is issued by School Administration with a bid opening date of December 7, 2011. This IFB calls for bids for outsourcing the service only, with the districts keeping ownership of the bus fleet.

November 7, 2011

Special Town Meeting

In response to a citizen question about the disposition of the transportation facilities to make way for the new school, Jerry Wedge, speaking for the School Committee, stated that "the school committee decided that the best course of action was to hire a consultant. The School Committee has hired a transportation consultant to look at all the options that are available to us. ¹ I can't tell you that we have an answer now, they're working on it as we speak. ² We did inform the transportation employees of our plan (to hire a consultant?). The consultant is expected to report back sometime in January/February; and we can alleviate concerns there. We know that we'll have a full analysis of the potential solutions. Some of the options that we know that they'll be going to come back to us on are finding a different

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location in Concord to keep our buses and possibly outsourcing our buses. We are aware that or we have talked to the consultants that anything we do we expect to be cost neutral because we own our own fleet now so if we move to some other model we want to make sure it was cost neutral. And the other thing I just want to mention is once we do get our consultant's report and understanding there may be some concerns or questions in the community we will have some open forums to address that further."

Meeting recorded and available at <http://concordtv.org/video-on-demand>

¹ Not accurate. Flahive Consulting Group was not hired to consider all options, they were hired to assist in the transition to outsourcing.

² Contradicts October 20th statement by Flaherty at Patch.com

January 24, 2012

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Transportation Report – John Flaherty. Mr. Flaherty gave an overview of the Transportation Report. The school administration recommends that CPS and CCRSD outsource school transportation for an estimated savings of \$373,000 per year and to avoid a capital expense of \$1,200,000-\$1,300,000, not including land acquisition. There will be a Transportation Forum on February 1, 2012 at 7:00 PM at Alcott School. Citizens were asked to give comments after the presentation.

<http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/minutes/2012/2012-01-24-JT.pdf>

February 1, 2012

Forum Meeting

The 250 seat Alcott Auditorium was overflowing with citizens opposed to outsourcing generally and to First Student specifically.

Citizens were told that outsourcing would be cheaper than retaining transportation in-house. That was not true either on the cost of outsourcing (see Susan Kalled letter) or on the cost for retaining transportation in-house. (Admittedly it's hard to tell what the in-house transportation costs actually are as the numbers provided change over time and there is a serious lack of transparency in the school budgets. See details under April 17, 2012 entry below.)

- Transportation Report from this meeting stated budget is \$2,185,120 (contrast with \$1.28million from October 28 Concord Journal article)

- School administrators state that outsourcing to First Student will save \$373,291. ³

- School administrators say outsourcing is necessary to 'close a budget gap' of \$331,328 for CPS and \$86,322 for CCRSD

³As shown in a letter by Susan Kalled to the School Committee and School Administration dated February 9, 2012, the First Student bid was seriously flawed. Actual costs would have been approximately \$190,000 more than bid, reducing the supposed savings to \$182,000. Also missing in the savings calculations was any financial consideration for maintenance and repair of the 27 additional school vehicles further eroding the supposed savings. (Susan Kalled letter on page 9)

Meeting recorded and available at <http://concordtv.org/video-on-demand>

February 7, 2012

CTASST formed – Citizens Taking Action for Safe School Transportation

<http://ctasst.org/>

February 9, 2012

wickedlocal.com/concord

Deputy Superintendent Flaherty announced that all outsourcing bids were canceled.

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What the school administration did not tell the public is that they had been informed on February 7 by the OIG that if the administration proceeded with the bids, they would be found in violation of Massachusetts General Law 30B. At that point the administration chose to reject the bids rather than have them declared as violating the law. The OIG will not confirm this to anyone other than the citizen who made the complaint as they have a strict confidentiality policy. That citizen will confirm this information if requested.

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/concord/news/x574402949/UPDATE-Inspector-General-s-office-looks-into-transportation-bid-process-in-Concord#ixzz1m5DWmkUU>

February 9, 2012

Financial Committee Minutes

Chairwoman Wilson pointed out that “The budget gap is not a justification to outsource; in the past budget gaps have been closed without outsourcing transportation or other services.” Further it was pointed out that there would be little difference in the school operating budget from claimed outsource savings as “the savings from outsourcing would include the cost of benefits provided for the Transportation employees but this savings with respect to the CPS employees would not appear in the CPS budget because the cost of benefits for those employees appears in the Town Budget, not the CPS budget. Of the \$370,000 in benefits (group insurance and pension) provided for CCRSD Transportation employees, about \$90,000 would be realized as savings in the CCRSD budget but not all of that savings would be reflected in the FY13 budget.”

It was also understood that the CCRSD ‘gap’ would likely be closed by state reimbursements and John Flaherty had indicated that Article 9, requesting \$325,000 for a supplemental appropriation for the current year would probably not be moved.

http://concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA_FinComMin/2012%2002%2009.doc

February 14, 2012

School Committee Meeting Minutes

The School Committee stated that if the budget gap between the fincom recommendations and the School Committee budget request was closed and if a suitable facility could be found to lease, then a decision on outsourcing would be postponed so a thorough and complete study of the matter would be taken.

School Committee agreed to issue an (Request for Proposal) RFP to lease a maintenance facility for a year so the transportation issue could be reviewed as originally committed was made. Administration stressed the need to have this as soon as possible because they have 30 non-bus vehicles that need to be maintained.

<http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/minutes/2012/2012-02-14-JT.pdf>

The School Committee was presented with a petition signed, at that time, by over 430 citizens requesting that they take time to conduct a thorough, open review before making any changes to transportation.

<http://www.change.org/petitions/concord-school-committee-and-concord-carlisle-regional-school-committee-vote-no-on-the-school-transportation-outsourcing-recommendation>

February 28, 2012

School Committee Meeting Minutes

The School Committee changed its stance from the February 14th meeting and authorized the administration to issue a second Invitation for Bids (IFB) to outsource transportation services and to sell

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the bus fleet. Deputy Superintendent Flaherty tells the SC that in his mind leasing for a year is the contingency plan, the first choice is to outsource.

<http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/minutes/2012/2012-02-28-JT.pdf>

March 22, 2012

Financial Committee Minutes

Fincom voted to approve an appropriation of \$331k closing the CPS 'gap'. An additional \$88k of funding came through from the state closing the CCRSD 'gap'.

http://concordma.gov/Pages/ConcordMA_FinComMin/2012%2003%2022%20Minutes.docx

March 27, 2012

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Deputy Superintendent Flaherty recommended holding off on public evaluation of the RFP responses for leasing (due 3/30) until the first joint School Committee meeting after Town Meeting (May 8th at the earliest). His argument was that it might negatively impact the IFBs if the RFP data was released. This was in direct contradiction to his previous position in February that the IFBs would not be affected by the RFP. The School Committee agreed, moving further from their 'find a suitable short-term option and take a year to review' stance.

During discussion of Special Town Meeting Articles, CCRSD member Louis Salemy told the committee that since the articles were not binding the committee should just ignore them. "It's the same as asking the School Committee to stand on their heads for two hours. Just as ridiculous."

During discussion of the Articles Diana Rigby said she felt the School Committee should speak at Special Town Meeting and explain to citizens that "they've been led to believe these votes mean something, but they won't."

Diana Rigby informed the School Committee that they would be issuing a bus survey. There was push back by some School Committee members regarding the wording on one question which stated that outsourcing would be more costly than maintaining in-house. Eventually they agreed to change the language to 'may be' more costly. It was a 4 question survey.

Meeting recorded and available at <http://concordtv.org/video-on-demand>

March 30, 2012

Opening of RFPs for leasing at 10am - Five proposals were submitted for a leased maintenance facility.

April 10, 2012

School Committee Meeting Minutes

Peter Fischelis urges the committee to keep their word and lease a facility for maintenance and keep transportation in-house for a year. CCRSD refused to make the motion. A motion was made for CPS, but Pam Gannon and Jerry Wedge voted against and Fabian Fondriest was not present. So it was a 2-2 vote. Jerry Wedge informed the School Committee that he spoke with the Town Moderator asking to modify Special Town Meeting Article 3 to include \$1.5M for a replacement facility. The moderator disallowed this act.

<http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/minutes/2012/2012-04-10-JT.pdf>

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April 17, 2012

IFBs for transportation service opened. Three bids, Dee Bus, First Student and Durham Bus Company.

BID SUMMARY			
	Durham	Dee	1st Student
2012-2013	\$ 2,472,190.60	\$ 2,604,725.00	\$ 2,446,891.96
2013-2014	\$ 2,546,399.55	\$ 2,642,975.00	\$ 2,479,770.94
2014-2015	\$ 2,622,686.25	\$ 2,681,225.00	\$ 2,513,125.01
TOTAL	\$ 7,641,276.40	\$ 7,928,925.00	\$ 7,439,787.91

It is difficult to get an accurate estimate of in-house costs because the data provided by the administration changes.

October 28, 2011	Concord Journal	\$1.28M
December 13, 2011	Proposed Budget	\$1.54M
February 1, 2012	Transportation Report	\$2.18M
February 10, 2012	Transportation Report	\$2.53M
May 3, 2012	Transportation Services	\$2.65M or \$2.19M

April 20, 2012

IFBs for selling the bus fleet are opened. Two bidders, one is disqualified as it did not meet minimum bid. Remaining bidder, First Student bid \$1,595,700. Note that the proceeds of the sale would not all go to the districts. The CPS portion would go to the town of Concord.

April 23, 2012

School Committee meeting prior to Town Meeting. School Committee voted on two transportation motions.

1. Vote to accept a short-term solution for Transportation Services by keeping the district-operated bus service for 2012-13 school year.
Motion passed 5-2 with Louis Salemy and Chad Kosky opposing.
2. Vote to appoint a Transportation Services Advisory Committee (according to SC Policy BDF) to research, evaluate, and recommend a long-term solution for Transportation Services beyond 2012-2013 school year.
Louis Salemy changed the scope of the committee to site selection only and to provide consultation services not to research, evaluate and recommend.
Motion passed with Louis' changes, but 5-2 with Louis Salemy and Chad Kosky opposing.

<http://concordpublicschools.net/schoolcommittee/minutes/2012/2012-04-23-JT.pdf>

April 24, 2012

Special Town Meeting

Voters overwhelmingly passed Article 3, to Retain Current Transportation Department, Article 4, Citizen Committee to Study School Transportation, and Article 5 to Reinstitute Comprehensive School Budget Information. All passed by declared majority vote.

Meeting recorded and available at <http://concordtv.org/video-on-demand>

Also released at Special Town Meeting were the results from a CTASST survey on transportation.

Available at: <http://ctasst.org/data/uploads/surveyresultscomplete.pdf>

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May 3, 2012

Town Moderator announces appointments to the Citizens Transportation Committee (CTC) created by Article 4 at Special Town Meeting.

May 15, 2012

First CTC meeting held. Meetings planned for every other week through August with a presentation to the School Committee in September. Agendas, minutes, etc. can be found at http://concordma.gov/pages/ConcordMA_BComm/CitizenTrans

June 26, 2012

School Committee Transportation Advisory Committee has first meeting. Agendas, minutes, etc. can be found at <http://concordpublicschools.net/school-committee>

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February 8, 2011

To: School Committee Members, Mr. Flaherty and Ms. Rigby:
Cc: FinCom, Selectmen

First my thanks to Mr. Flaherty and Ms. Rigby for listening to the many concerns and comments regarding the potential outsourcing of school busing February 1. Thanks also to the attention paid by the school committee members.

Second, this letter is a follow-up to my request to allow a group of concerned citizens and parents to work with you and the transportation department to investigate *all* potential transportation solutions. I specifically say work “with” because the knowledge and experience of the various managers of the transportation department are imperative for formulating viable options and understanding true costs. The goal of the working group is to propose an implementable plan that would not incur additional costs. Last Wednesday evening we heard over and over that we are in this situation because there are no funds to cover the cost of relocating or rebuilding the transportation department. This declaration seems to make clear that a solution that does not incur costs would be acceptable to the school department and the school committee.

Of course the most critical issue here is the safety of our children. Many individuals spoke at length of their concerns and presented documented legal cases against First Student, not to mention the numerous Boston Globe articles documenting numerous problems with First Student in Boston. Suffice it to say I echo all of the concerns previously communicated to you.

It was disclosed at the meeting February 1 that there is information available to indicate that the proposed savings will not be as great as communicated (~\$373K). Examples not taken into account to determine cost savings:

- 1) The cost of buses for non-routine daily pick up and drop off of students. This includes field trips, athletic trips, new teacher orientation, high school club trips, prom, etc. In the 2010-2011 school year CCHS athletic trips alone covered 18,792 miles and 3170 hrs, already well beyond the scope of service provided by the First Student bid (12,000 miles and 1200 hours, section G). In the 2010-2011 school year non-routine trips covered 118, 778 miles and 12,840 hrs. In an attempt to make an accurate comparison, if one subtracts Metco, PTG-funded runs and late-runs (section F of bid), there remains the cost for 25,501 miles and 3981 hours. In the bid (section G) First Student charges in the first year \$1.03/mile and \$30.75/hr. for non-routine trips, thus requiring an additional cost of \$148,681.75 for equivalent service. The bid also charges in the first year \$76,253.50 for CCHS late-runs, however the cost for such runs in 2010-2011 was only \$34,087, thus incurring a cost of \$42,166.50 to outsource. In summary, the projected savings of \$373,000 appears to be more in the neighborhood of \$182,152. The mileage and hours of bus service in 2010-2011 came from a document generated by transportation employees at the request of Mr. Flaherty and is available for examination. Why this information was not communicated to the school committee or taken into consideration when recommending First Student is unclear. If funding for non-routine trips is budgeted elsewhere it would be important to communicate this.
- 2) The cost of maintaining non-bus school department vehicles by a private garage. Mr. Flaherty responded that most of the 30 vehicles are trailers. I am sure he realizes, by now,

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that he misspoke. In fact there are just 2 trailers. Vehicles include: 3 cars used for driver's Ed, 5 vehicles used by data services (includes a Prius), 10 maintenance vehicles (including 2 tractors, 2 dump trucks, 4 pick-up trucks, 2-3 vans), 2 cafeteria vehicles (Honda CRV, Ford Explorer), 7 plows, 1 van used by the electrician, 2 cars used by the transportation and maintenance managers. It could easily cost \$30,000/yr. if not more in the private sector to maintain/repair these vehicles, more depending on their age, further reducing any cost savings to ~\$152,152.

As you see I think there are many areas that require more careful and rigorous analysis to determine what is best for our children and what is financially prudent.

I look forward to your response and working with you to find the best solution for all involved.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Kalled

Additional Signatories

Karen Belinky

Fred Martin

Andrea Medved

Brian Burt

William T. Plummer

Jennifer Johnson

THE
FLAHIVE CONSULTING
GROUP

July 28, 2011

Mr. John Flaherty
Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Operations
Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
Ripley Building
120 Meriam Road
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Mr. Flaherty,

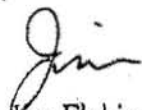
Thank you for meeting with me to discuss your school bus operation and bid requirements. The following proposal will provide you with the necessary services to assist in transitioning to a vendor provided school transportation service.

- Determine market value of bus fleet
- Prepare bid specification document
- Assist with pre-bid conference
- Communicate with bus vendors to answer questions and solicit bid submittals
- Review bid submittals and recommend award

Fee: \$5,500.00

Additional services such as a detailed financial impact report, bus route review, bell time analysis, and fleet utilization report can be provided for an additional fee.

Sincerely,



Jim Flahive
The Flahive Consulting Group

76 COVENTRY LANE * LONGMEADOW, MA 01106 (413) 478-7421

FLAHIVE.JAMES@GMAIL.COM