

1 SPECIAL SAU 41 GOVERNING BOARD
2 JANUARY 3, 2019
3 **MEETING MINUTES**

4
5 A special meeting of the SAU 41 Governing Board was conducted on Thursday, January 3, 2019 at 6:05 p.m. at
6 the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.
7

8 Tammy Fareed, Chairman, presided:
9

10 Members of the Board Present: Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman
11 Holly Deurloo Babcock, Secretary
12 Elizabeth Brown, Hollis/Brookline COOP (arrived at 6:08 p.m.)
13 John Cross, Secretary, Hollis/Brookline COOP (arrived at 6:09 p.m.)
14 Rebecca Howie, Brookline School Board
15 Kenneth Haag, Vice Chairman, Brookline School Board (arrived at 6:08 p.m.)
16 Amy Kellner, Secretary, Hollis School Board
17 Matthew Maguire, Chairman, Brookline School Board
18 Robert Mann, Chairman, Hollis School Board (arrived at 6:07 p.m.)
19 Alison Marsano, Secretary, Brookline School Board
20 Tom Solon, Chairman, Hollis/Brookline COOP (arrived at 6:08 p.m.)
21 Cindy VanCoughnett, Vice Chairman, Hollis/Brookline COOP
22 Krista Whalen, Hollis/Brookline COOP
23

24 Members of the Board Absent: Tom Enright, Hollis School Board
25 Melanie Levesque, Hollis/Brookline COOP
26

27 Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
28 Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent
29 Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator
30 Linda Sherwood, Assistant Business Administrator
31 Douglas Orde, Hollis Transportation, Inc.
32 Bruce Lyskawa, Sr., President, Butler Transportation
33 Susan Wider, Hollis Transportation
34

35
36 **APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER**

37
38 Chairman Fareed appointed Rebecca Howie to serve as Process Observer.
39

40 **AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

41
42 Superintendent Corey noted the non-public session listed on the agenda would not be needed and is not
43 recommended for the subject matter before the Board.
44

45 *There being no objection, the agenda was adjusted as requested.*
46

47 **CORRESPONDENCE** - None
48

49 **PUBLIC INPUT** - None

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

SAU 41 Governing Board [December 13, 2018](#)

The following amendment was offered:

Page 2, Line 4; delete “of”

**MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO APPROVE, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT
MOTION CARRIED**

9-0
Members Kellner and Marsano Abstained

SAU 41 Governing Board - **Public Hearing** [December 13, 2018](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO APPROVE, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS
MOTION CARRIED**

9-0
Members Solon, Brown, Kellner, Mann, and Marsano Abstained

DISCUSSION

- SAU 41 Three-Year Transportation Agreement

Superintendent Corey noted the [agenda](#) packet included the two bids received for the transportation contract; Hollis Transportation, Inc., Hollis, NH and Butler Bus Service, Manchester, NH. The three-year contract (2019-2022) would have the option of an additional two years.

The packet also included an updated comparison of the two bids provided by the Business Administrator as well as bid specifications. The bid comparison is as close an apples-to-apples comparison as could be identified:

	<u>Hollis Trans.</u> (increase over FY19)	<u>Butler Trans.</u> (increase over FY19)
<u>Hollis School District</u>		
Regular Route	\$ 340,747 (\$34,213 or 11%)	\$ 393,380 (\$86,848 or 28%)
Special Education	105,870 (\$13,809 or 15%)	112,314 (\$20,253 or 22%)
Total:	\$ 446,617 (\$48,023 or 12%)	\$ 505,694 (\$107,100 or 50%)
<u>Amount over FY20 Est.</u>	\$ 294	\$ 59,371
<u>Brookline School District</u>		
Regular Route	\$ 317,452 (\$67,083 or 27%)	\$ 307,940 (\$57,571 or 23%)
Special Education	220,248 (\$28,728 or 15%)	232,824 (\$41,304 or 22%)
Total:	\$ 537,700 (\$95,811 or 42%)	\$ 540,764 (\$98,875 or 45%)
<u>Amount over FY20 Est.</u>	\$ 44,300	\$ 47,364
<u>COOP School District</u>		
Regular Route	\$ 562,227 (\$80,213 or 17%)	\$ 676,060 (\$194,045 or 40%)

1	Special Education	538,976 (\$70,301 or 15%)	570,846 (\$102,171 or 22%)
2	Athletics	87,620 (\$11,429 or 15%)	152,383 (\$76,191 or 100%)
3	Total:	\$1,188,823 (\$161,943 or 16%)	\$1,399,289 (\$372,408 or 36%)
4			
5	<u>Amount over FY20 Est.</u>	\$ 36,684	\$ 247,149
6			

7 In response to specific questions that had been posed, Superintendent Corey stated, with regard to driver
8 training required, Hollis Transportation requires 10 hours in the 1st year and 8 in the 2nd. There are currently 2
9 drivers in training. With regard to how they actively seek new drivers, Hollis Transportation utilizes the
10 employment sections in newsprint, Indeed.com, and posts signs in both towns. Relative to litigation, Hollis
11 Transportation has never been litigated against. They have been the sole provider for the Hollis school systems
12 since 1978.

13
14 Both bidders regularly review their routes using software and information provided by the SAU regarding
15 students, stops, locations, etc.

16
17 Butler Transportation started as a truck company and has been in existence since 1949. They have been
18 providing bus service for neighboring communities for a number of years. Superintendent Corey stated he has
19 checked with the Superintendents of each of the districts Butler Transportation services. The information he
20 received from Milford and Amherst was a description very similar to that of the transportation company the
21 SAU currently utilizes; veteran transportation company, friendliness of drivers, small-town service.

22
23 Superintendent Corey remarked designing routes in New Hampshire is very difficult given the characteristics,
24 e.g., dirt roads, limited sidewalks. Many of the pieces for which you would hear both pros and cons for either
25 of the companies are very similar.

26
27 He was informed Butler Transportation has been very responsive to questions or items that come up. He stated
28 the same to be his experience with Hollis Transportation. One of the biggest struggles both companies are
29 addressing, and work hard at, is the driver shortage, which is a State and national problem.

30
31 One of the questions raised was around the cost of athletic runs. Because of the lack of drivers, the SAU was
32 forced to contract with other agencies, during the fall. The desire was to understand the additional cost incurred
33 as a result. Superintendent Corey stated it to have been \$7,270. He stated his expectation the spring season
34 may prove difficult as well. As long as the economy continues on its current path, gaining drivers will remain
35 difficult.

36
37 Superintendent Corey noted representatives of both companies were present, and available to answer questions.

38
39 Ms. Whalen commented it appears all of the bid prices represent an increase over the FY20 estimates except for
40 regular transportation in Hollis where the FY20 estimate was \$344,034, and the bid price came in at \$340,747.
41 Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator explained when she questioned the discrepancies, Hollis Transportation
42 came back with a lower cost in their bid.

43
44 Mr. Solon noted included in the bid from Hollis Transportation is a request to “use retread tires and for the life
45 of the buses to be extended out to 12 years.”. The list of buses provided shows there are already buses
46 exceeding that.

47 Ms. Seeley explained the Request for Proposal (RFP) requests a list of what bidders would like to have as
48 exceptions to the RFP. The request by Hollis Transportation is to be able to continue the extension already
49 given to them. Asked what the RFP identifies for an age, Ms. Seeley stated her belief it is 10 years.

1 Mr. Cross referred to the list provided and questioned if it represents there are a number of existing vehicles that
2 will no longer be utilized.

3
4 A representative of Hollis Transportation (speaking away from the microphone) stated, in accordance with the
5 RFP for the prior contract, by the start of the third year, vehicles were required to be within the ten-year period.
6 In discussion with the Superintendent he was informed the SAU would authorize Hollis Transportation to
7 extend that period if the funds that would have been utilized for replacement were instead put toward increasing
8 driver compensation to try to entice drivers. The mileage on the vehicles was low enough and the vehicles are
9 inspected four times/year.

10
11 Mr. Solon questioned if, under the new contract, vehicles exceeding the 12 year period would be replaced, and
12 was told those vehicles would be replaced with the start of a new contract.

13
14 Vice Chairman Sarris questioned if the bid price reflects an additional increase in salary, and was informed
15 there would be an increase in driver salary.

16
17 Superintendent Corey asked if that would make Hollis Transportation competitive with other bus companies in
18 the neighboring towns, and was informed it would put them above.

19
20 Mr. Cross remarked one of the questions resulting from the last meeting was the type of metric there might be
21 to determine performance of a company, e.g., # of routes missed. He questioned if metrics were able to be
22 identified. Superintendent Corey reiterated, based on information he has obtained from existing users of Butler
23 Transportation and the SAU's experience with Hollis Transportation, they are very similar; both companies
24 work very diligently. Many of the issues that have been seen in our and surrounding districts revolve around
25 driver shortages. No concerns have been raised regarding vendor response. What the driver situation will be
26 moving forward remains unknown.

27
28 With a larger fleet you can share some of the driver absences. Superintendent Corey commented since the
29 opening days of schools, the SAU has run on time and he does not believe there to have been the doubling of
30 any runs. The District has had to reach out for assistance with athletic runs. He suggested part of that to be his
31 fault as the day runs of getting students to and from school are his responsibility whereas the athletic runs,
32 which, although he considers to be very important, are secondary.

33
34 Chairman Fareed remarked in Hollis there were specific shortfalls. They may not have been within the reach of
35 anyone to resolve any differently, but they caused a great deal of concern. She questioned if Butler
36 Transportation had a different approach. One of the large differences between the two bidders is size. She does
37 not know that distributing the larger number of buses that Butler Transportation has, across all of their different
38 customers makes any actual difference in outcome. She requested the representatives comment on how they
39 approach some of the challenges that came about in Hollis.

40
41 The example provided was of a situation where, because of a reduced number of drivers, the Hollis School
42 District had split runs, students not arriving to school on time, etc. She questioned if Butler Transportation
43 experienced similar issues this past year or the year prior.

1 Bruce Lyskawa, Sr., President, Butler Transportation, stated the challenge has been there. What they have done
2 is be very proactive in terms of hiring and recruiting. The trick is not so much the hiring process because that is
3 lousy. The key is in the recruiting; getting your message out there to the stay-at-home parent that this job would
4 fit their particular lifestyle, retired individuals, etc. Once a person becomes a bus driver they tend to stay.
5

6 Asked how they address shortages in real time, he stated they share drivers. Although not ideal, he provided the
7 example of sending a driver to Lebanon to help out and paying that driver his/her full day's pay plus covering
8 the cost of staying in the area. When asked, he stated that cost would be the responsibility of the company. He
9 spoke of relationships with other bus companies.
10

11 Chairman Fareed questioned the circumstance that would result in the sharing of a bus. Mr. Lyskawa
12 responded if receiving assistance from another bus company, rather than shuffling the driver back and forth,
13 they take the spare bus from that company and cover the run he has to cover. He would do the same in return.
14

15 Chairman Fareed noted a critical part of the bid from Butler Transportation is that the company would be
16 attempting to lease/rent/purchase property in the two towns in order to bring its operation into our
17 neighborhood. She questioned if the company has the means to do that outside of the contract and if there are
18 any guarantees that would occur, if awarded the contract.
19

20 Mr. Lyskawa noted the RFP provides 30 days to come up with a lease or purchase. The vote would be
21 contingent upon that. Mr. Maguire asked for clarification of who would cover the cost of the lease/purchase.
22 Mr. Lyskawa stated the cost to be that of the company. He spoke of the financial statement that was requested
23 noting the company has good solid net worth and has no difficulty borrowing, if needed.
24

25 When asked, Superintendent Corey clarified, were the contract to be awarded to Butler Transportation, it would
26 be contingent upon their acquiring a location within the two towns. He and the Business Administrator have
27 been proactive; have provided the Town Managers as resources. There are potential sites that may be available.
28 If awarded the contract, they would have 30 days to provide notification of a site having been leased/purchased.
29 That information would be brought to the Board, and the contract executed.
30

31 Mr. Solon noted the last page of the packet, which provides information on transportation costs for athletic runs
32 from areas schools. Superintendent Corey stated the information was provided by the Administration in
33 response to a request from the Board relative to the difference between the prices quoted within the two bids.
34 Mr. Solon noted, for the COOP School District, athletic and special education runs are the areas that show the
35 largest difference between the two bids. In the area of special education, the SAU has explored a variety of
36 options and executed some very successfully. He questioned if there are alternate strategies available for
37 athletic runs.
38

39 Superintendent Corey responded that is possible for some of the smaller teams. During last year's budget cycle,
40 the Board supported the purchase of two vans, which have been on order for many months. A fire in Tennessee
41 delayed the manufacture. What was intended to be a late summer delivery is now in the new year. The
42 manufacturer is backlogged for those transportation vehicles. They will become part of the SAU's fleet and will
43 be used to service some of the vocational transportation needs and the smaller athletic teams. He spoke of
44 success the District experienced this fall in being able to use a van for the golf team.

1 **DELIBERATIONS**

- 2
- 3 • To see what action the Board will take regarding the SAU 41 three-year Transportation Agreement
- 4

5 **MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO AWARD THE THREE-YEAR (2019-2022) TRANSPORTATION**
6 **CONTRACT TO BUTLER TRANSPORTATION PER THEIR SUBMITTED BID. FUNDING**
7 **SOURCE IS THE GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET OF EACH OF THE DISTRICTS**
8 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BROWN**

9

10 **ON THE QUESTION**

11

12 Mr. Solon remarked without casting any aspersions against the current contract holder, he has sat through many
13 meetings where the question has been asked are there alternatives, and the answer has been yes, but they will
14 likely cost more. What the Board has been presented with is an alternative, which is at a greater cost.
15 However, those costs potentially offer tangible benefits; higher starting salaries, additional pay and benefits that
16 might improve the ability to competitively recruit drivers, a larger bus fleet that offers potential backup, and an
17 expressed strategy of mutual aid. The projected increase may not be as great, particularly in the COOP School
18 District, should the district choose other strategies regarding some of the optional transportation especially in
19 light of the fact that State law does not require bus transportation for a significant portion of the COOP
20 population.

21

22 Chairman Fareed stated her recollection State law requires transportation K-8.

23

24 Mr. Solon spoke of the challenges the SAU has faced over the years with regard to transportation options, and
25 having been presented with what he considers a viable alternative for the first time in a number of years. He
26 believes it to be time to test that premise.

27

28 Vice Chairman Sarris commented on the bus drivers having close ties to the community. Such a rational change
29 could be, over time, for the better; however, there will be some immediate repercussions as a result of a
30 transition. She wished for the Board to consider the potential unintended consequences, of such a large change,
31 to the community. There is a cost and also a benefit to having a community service like this. She is uncertain
32 how that dynamic would change.

33

34 Ms. Marsano stated her uncertainty a change for the sake of change is necessarily a good thing. The major
35 problem is that of a national driver shortage. Both companies have been responsive. The fact is the Board will
36 hear the complaints around what is occurring; however, that situation is out of the Board's control and outside of
37 their control.

38

39 Mr. Solon stated disagreement noting the options that are present with a 300+ bus fleet are different. Ms.
40 Marsano responded the 300+ bus fleet is not going to be stationed in Hollis and Brookline. Mr. Solon
41 commented a good portion of it will be stationed in Milford and Amherst. Ms. Marsano respectfully disagreed
42 that would solve the SAU's transportation woes.

43

44 Chairman Fareed commented if the transportation needs of all of the districts occur at similar times, all of the
45 available drivers who are currently in a bus are capped. If there is a shortfall, she is uncertain it could be
46 addressed. Mr. Solon stated they are not all occurring at the same time; all within a few-hour period.

1 Ms. Marsano spoke of difficulty asking taxpayers to absorb the additional cost particularly at a time when the
2 districts are looking to push through major budget increases. Mr. Solon stated the Brookline impact to be less
3 than 10%. Ms. Marsano stated Brookline residents are unhappy with their taxes. She has to take into account
4 the cost benefit analysis. She is not convinced a change would produce the initial gains of confidence and
5 happiness the Board and communities would like to see.

6
7 Ms. Deurloo Babcock spoke of concern with the budget. The impact on the COOP School District would be in
8 the area of \$250,000. She does not believe the district could absorb that additional cost without cutting
9 programs or making additional changes. She is uncertain changes such as utilizing vans for the smaller athletic
10 teams would be sufficient. There is an inherent risk. The driver shortage is a national problem. The current
11 company has done well by the COOP District.

12
13 When asked, Superintendent Corey stated cumulative increases (all three districts) over what was estimated in
14 the proposed budgets for FY20 would be \$353,884 if contracting with Butler Transportation and \$81,278 if
15 contracting with Hollis Transportation. He stated concern with how the Budget/Finance Committees will
16 address the increase, e.g. add to the bottom lines of the budget or require the Administration to make reductions
17 in other areas. Were reductions required, to achieve that level of reduction, there is the potential it would result
18 in a reduction in personnel in the classroom.

19
20 In the COOP School District, a request is being made for a new teacher, a number of initiatives are coming
21 forward, etc. From the standpoint of programming/curriculum, he is concerned as he is uncertain the Budget
22 Committee would support adding \$247,149 to the overall budget. It could result in there being two different
23 numbers on the floor at the Annual Meeting.

24
25 In the Hollis School District (potential \$59,371 increase), efforts are being made to add support for acceleration
26 and interventions in math and reading.

27
28 In the Brookline School District, the decision was made to cut ½ a reading teacher. That \$47,364 is nearly that
29 same amount.

30
31 Vice Chairman Fareed noted the bid from Hollis Transportation also represents an increase to the proposed
32 budgets; Hollis School District - \$294, Brookline School District - \$44,300, and COOP School District -
33 \$36,684. The overall difference between the increases is \$272,606.

34
35 Vice Chairman Sarris questioned if the contract decision could be put before the voters in the form of a warrant
36 article. Mr. Solon responded, if putting something forward in that manner, it can only be a single option.

37
38 Ms. Marsano questioned Hollis Transportation relative to the cost of the increase over the estimate,
39 understanding one aspect is an increase in driver compensation. The representative from Hollis Transportation
40 (speaking away from the microphone) commented on two runs going up to Ball Hill Road, which represent an
41 expense; go all the way around the other side of Town and up through Milford to pick up the COOP and
42 elementary students.

43
44 Vice Chairman Sarris noted the largest percentage increase over projections relative to the Hollis Transportation
45 bid is that of the regular education runs at 27%. The Brookline School District would experience an overall
46 increase (above projections) of 42% whereas the Hollis School District would experience a 12% increase and
47 the COOP School District a 16% increase. Ms. Seeley noted the percentages identified represent the level of
48 increase over the FY19 costs not the projected costs for FY20. She noted the cost identified by Butler
49 Transportation for regular education runs in the Brookline School District is lower than that of Hollis
50 Transportation.

1
2 Mr. Cross commented he would have to think that, at some extreme, if getting a certain amount of value for the
3 increased cost, it would be something the SAU would consider. He questioned what drives the cost, and stated
4 surprise neither of the proposals specifically addresses the driver shortage issue. Mr. Solon stated Butler
5 Transportation compensates their drivers at a higher rate. Mr. Cross reiterated they still have the same driver
6 shortage problem. He questioned what other factors can discriminate between the two bids in terms of efforts to
7 address that issue.

8
9 Vice Chairman Sarris commented on the potential; there are resources available to a larger company. The
10 reality is we have not tried it yet and do not know, we just know it is more than nothing. There are buses and
11 drivers out there, and there is potential access to them. Whether it will solve any problems, we don't know that.
12 But it is a thing that the other company does not have. She can see something concrete that would be gained
13 with the additional cost. What she is struggling with is if we are willing to pay for that and what the unintended
14 costs would be. There is an infrastructure to a larger company, e.g., technology. Because they are managing
15 more data there has got to be a cost to that.

16
17 Mr. Cross commented what he heard earlier is that all of the companies are experiencing the same problem
18 regardless of their size, infrastructure, etc. He sees this as an opportunity for Hollis Transportation to do
19 something different, and what he is seeing is kind of status quo.

20
21 Mr. Lyskawa stated he has a 12-page spreadsheet that he uses for his bids. That is what was used to cost out all
22 aspects of the operation. He would have to come into the SAU with a whole new fleet. The difference in cost
23 between a 77-passenger bus and a 71-passenger bus is approx. \$800. When talking an average of \$90,000/bus,
24 that cost is minimal and provides for added capacity and flexibility.

25
26 Mr. Solon commented the bid from Butler Transportation is approx. 8% higher than the Hollis Transportation
27 bid.

28
29 Mr. Lyskawa remarked his approach is to break it down on a cost per bus/per day. The bid pricing for the first
30 year is \$335.91. This coming September will be the last year of his contract with Milford, and the cost there
31 will be \$334.70. In Amherst it will be \$341.30. Pricing in his business has gone up.

32
33 Ms. Whalen stated agreement it is nice to have another option and she appreciates the bid provided by Butler
34 Transportation. However, at this time, she is of the opinion the increase that would result from a change in
35 vendors is too great for the District, even if taking the athletic runs out of the equation. She would find it
36 difficult to put such an increase forward to the taxpayers. Because of the national crisis, it is easy to react, and
37 she appreciates the SAU has a local company that has done right by it. There have been struggles in the past
38 few years, but she would imagine a lot of school districts have had the same experience. At this point, she is
39 supportive of continuing to contract with Hollis Transportation for the next three years.

40
41 Chairman Fareed noted a number of Board members have indicated the need to depart the meeting at different
42 times, and asked for a sense of the Board in terms of the amount of continued discussion believed needed.

43
44 Mr. Solon stated his opinion a discussion that needed to occur was, to a certain degree, somewhat independent,
45 particularly for the COOP School District in terms of what would be done with the budget and the costs. He
46 could make arguments that would be specific to the COOP School District that might flavor the discussion.
47 Ms. Deurloo Babcock remarked the need for a new fleet indicates the need for new drivers, and questioned how
48 that would be accomplished.

1 Mr. Lyskawa stated the first thing he would do is recruit or put a real hard press on for the current drivers as
2 they know the students and have bonded with the students. The biggest thing the company has in its favor is the
3 pay scale. Drivers in Milford will be some of the highest paid drivers in the southern tier. In addition, you start
4 the process for new hires early.

5
6 Mr. Maguire questioned if there would be difficulty in acquiring a new fleet within the required timeframe. Mr.
7 Lyskawa stated he would have to put the order in by April 1st to receive the buses by July.

8
9 Mr. Solon stated he would be very comfortable making a proposal at the COOP level of instituting a nominal
10 bus fee for the high school. That is an example of a real proposal that could potentially have significant impact
11 on diminishing the tax burden.

12
13 Mr. Cross remarked we are here because of a fundamental problem. He has heard that both companies have
14 driver shortages. He has not seen anything in the proposals that addresses that. One company is slightly larger
15 and has more buses and drivers, but they are all assigned as far as he can tell.

16
17 Mr. Solon commented in the day when this shortage was not where it is now, there were spare drivers and
18 substitutes. That situation, due to the shortage, is not sustainable. The things that were talked about that are
19 non-surplus oriented are feasible but are not conventional.

20
21 Chairman Fareed provided the example of Hollis Transportation, over the past year, having had 4-5 drivers in
22 the pipeline. Some were lost to illness, some to poaching, some to just falling out of the sytem because of the
23 length of the certification process, some went off to drive big rigs instead of buses. It is a 3-4 month process
24 between someone applying to drive and being certified and in a bus driving.

25
26 Mr. Cross questioned allocating the approximately \$250,000 difference to Hollis Transportation with the intent
27 they hire four additional drivers to act as substitute drivers. Chairman Fareed commented it was not suggested
28 one company does something the other does not. Drivers are poached by differnet companies that offer greater
29 salary/benefits. Mr. Cross stated now to be the time to look to Hollis Transportation and instruct them to do
30 whatever they need to do with their bid to ensure we have drivers on hand.

31
32 Chairman Fareed noted there were two bids before the Board, which have been legally procured. Mr. Cross
33 stated his opinion the bids do not address the problem. Mr. Solon suggested the need to pay at the same rate so
34 that drivers would not be lost to organizations such as UPS, Fed Ex, etc.

35
36 Chairman Fareed stated understanding of the points being made. However, noted the Board was under legal
37 obligation to award a contract at this time, unless the Administration could identify an alternative.

38
39 Mr. Mann remarked what has been extremely visible to not only our communities but to the Board, is that when
40 there are driver shortages and we have students on buses that cannot get home or routes are split and parents are
41 left wondering where their children are, what it comes down to is your capacity to absorb the tough times.
42 When under stress, when you don't have the buses, what strategies do you have in place that soften those tough
43 times. Although wishing to be fair to both sides, he is grappling with the fact that \$250,000 could mean three
44 teachers somewhere. His concern is that awarding the contract with the information at hand is not fixing
45 anything.

46 Chairman Fareed questioned the legal standing to extend the discussion beyond this meeting. Superintendent
47 Corey stated the Brookline School Board has the Public Hearing on their budget on January 10th. They need a
48 number in that budget to bring forward to the Public Hearing. He spoke of the struggle to identify a date that is
49 available and for which a quorum of the Governing Board could be achieved.

1 *Ms. Whalen departed at 7:25 p.m.*

2
3 Mr. Mann stated what would help him is understanding the strategies. He has heard there is a cooperative
4 atmosphere that Butler Transportation has with other companies. He requested additional information regarding
5 that and other strategies/practices that are in place to mitigate times of unanticipated shortages.

6
7 Mr. Lyskawa stated the first strategy is to pay people a good wage. The second is to have ongoing training and
8 recruiting activities. Dispatchers from the various locations meet weekly and project the coming two weeks of
9 trips to identify where there are needs and how they can be addressed. Ideally, each can handle it on their own.
10 The last step is to reach out to other companies they have a relationship with for assistance. That is what their
11 operating procedure has been and is one they have been successful with. They are short because they like to
12 have 8 or 9 spare drivers. They hire individuals who are just athletic drivers for those runs.

13
14 Asked if there are many instances of the share strategy occurring, Mr. Lyskawa stated that occurs once or twice
15 a month.

16
17 Vice Chairman Sarris spoke of having to leave, and the desire to provide her input. She believes there to be
18 definite benefits of contracting with Butler Transportation and perhaps Hollis Transportation. The cost of a
19 change, particularly this year, is too great for the taxpayers to absorb. She is uncertain the benefits gained by
20 such a large increase would offset the potential ramifications of what it would mean for curriculum and other
21 planning.

22
23 Asked if his questions were answered, Mr. Cross commented, in his business, if he does not pay for a particular
24 service it is a risk because he is fully relying on the other person to provide the service under some gentleman's
25 agreement. Either we bake into the contract this type of sharing approach and they name who they share with,
26 there is a solid process, and we pay for it to ensure it happens, to him, it is a risk.

27
28 Chairman Fareed remarked the comment made is that unless the assurances are in writing, the Board is
29 responding to verbal assurances. They are being recorded. She does not believe the Board would receive a
30 written plan handed to it at this time that changes the distribution of risk. She stated her feeling there is a strong
31 concern that as members have to leave, one board could choose in a certain direction for itself that influences
32 the options of the other districts, and she would like the vote to be as well distributed as possible.

33
34 *Chairman Fareed called the question.*

35
36 **MOTION FAILED**

37 **1.6 / 7.4**

38 *Members Howie, Haag, Maguire, Marsano, Sarris, Fareed, Brown, Cross, VanCoughnett, and Deurloo*
39 *Babcock voted in opposition*

40
41 *Ms. Sarris departed at 7:30 p.m.*

1 **MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO AWARD THE THREE-YEAR (2019-2022) TRANSPORTATION**
2 **CONTRACT TO HOLLIS TRANSPORTATION PER THEIR SUBMITTED BID. FUNDING**
3 **SOURCE IS THE GENERAL OPERATING BUDGET OF EACH OF THE DISTRICTS**
4 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN**

5
6 ON THE QUESTION

7
8 Mr. Solon stated the desire for the same question to be asked of Hollis Transportation relative to their
9 methodology for ensuring unanticipated driver absences are covered.

10
11 Douglas Orde, Hollis Transportation, Inc., responded they have tried advertising in every place they can.
12 People get discouraged with the process and fall out of the system. They don't want to wait the 3-4 months. If
13 they pass the test the first time around, they complete the training in 3 months. Drivers are being provided
14 salary increases. There are two drivers currently being trained.

15
16 Asked about the number of new hires, whether retained or not, that occurred in this past year, Mr. Orde stated
17 there to have been 15-20. When asked what the revised starting salary is anticipated to be, he indicated \$16.00 -
18 \$17.00.

19
20 Susan Wider, 111 Silver Lake Road, Hollis

21
22 Stated she trains the drivers. If looking to cross roster, it is a process. She spoke of the requirements for a
23 driver to become certified, e.g., level of testing, mechanical knowledge. It is a difficult process to go through.
24 Some of the trainees have children of their own and are trying to work around their family schedule. Classroom
25 time isn't exactly dedicated; they try to accommodate people's schedules as much as possible.

26
27 Chairman Fareed commented those are all contingencies that cause people to fall out of the system, and the
28 question is what solutions are there to the situation that differs from those that so far have caused most of 15
29 people not to work out. What creative solutions do you think you could try that fall within the bid provided.

30
31 Ms. Wider remarked she has read and shared a lot of articles on strategies other districts across the nation have
32 been using, e.g., anyone within a five mile radius walks or provides their own transportation. She is uncertain
33 those residing in the two towns would agree with that. Chairman Fareed commented she does not believe that is
34 within their purview within the contract, and stated that possibility would not be discussed.

35
36 Ms. Wider commented being in two very small communities some of the strategies she has learned other
37 districts have used, don't apply. If wanting to use drivers from other companies and share, those drivers have to
38 be cross rostered.

39
40 Asked to clarify, she stated if Hollis Transportation wants to hire from another company, someone who for
41 some reason is not driving at the same time they are, that person has to be rostered with Hollis Transportation,
42 which means they would have to go through the State testing again.

43
44 Mr. Solon noted Butler Transportation does not have to go through that because the drivers are within their
45 overall system.

46
47 The representative from Hollis Transportation stated drivers have to be licensed in each district they drive.

1 Chairman Fareed commented on the difference in size between the two companies and noted, because of its
2 size, Hollis Transportation would have to cross roster with a different employer, and questioned how they
3 would go about doing that. She provided the example of two towns that share a boundary and the desire to have
4 this option.

5
6 Ms. Wider responded she has spoken with drivers in other companies, and has heard they do not want to drive
7 away from where they are now.

8
9 Mr. Cross questioned if the two drivers currently in training represent two additional drivers beyond what is
10 needed to cover the routes. The representative of Hollis Transportation stated the new drivers would eliminate
11 the need for him, as the backup driver, to drive the routes.

12
13 Ms. Brown commented Hollis Transportation discussed their problems with attrition through the recruitment
14 process. She questioned if Butler Transportation could provide a percentage relative to the number of their
15 drivers that are put through training that never become employees, to provide an idea of what the attrition issues
16 are with that recruitment process.

17
18 Mr. Lyskawa stated it is roughly a 50/50. Not only will individuals get discouraged, but there will be those that
19 the company washes out. You may have them in training, but you recognize after a few days that the individual
20 doesn't have the skillset to be a bus driver.

21
22 Mr. Cross stated he would be voting reluctantly as he feels the Board is not solving any problems. Ms. Deurloo
23 Babcock commented what the Board is being asked to do is determine which of the two bidders will be awarded
24 the contract for the next three years. Mr. Cross stated he would be making his decision based on cost, past
25 experience, and efforts to improve things moving forward.

26
27 Mr. Solon questioned if there is language within the contract that requires the contracted provider to fulfill all
28 routes. Chairman Fareed noted the contract language, which reads "if the CARRIER is, for any reason, unable
29 to furnish transportation in conformance with this Contract, the Superintendent of Schools, or Designee, is
30 authorized to hire a substitute bus or buses providing that they comply in all other respects with the safety
31 requirements of this Contract for such time as necessary, the total cost of which shall be borne by the
32 CARRIER. If no substitute bus service is arranged, a pro-rata deduction may be made to the contract price."

33
34 Mr. Solon stated it does not demand the services be provided per the contract, it allows for failure to fulfill the
35 contract intent and monetary compensation.

36
37 Ms. Marsano noted language included in the bid from Butler Transportation, which states "The District along
38 with Butler's Bus shall agree to create contract language that would hold Butler not liable for service problems
39 created by the National Driver Shortage."

40
41 Mr. Solon questioned if the option of reducing the contract to a period of one year was available, and the
42 validity of the current bids were the contract reduced to one year. Superintendent Corey commented he would
43 call into question the bid process; the traditional RFP was used for a three-year contract. Were the RFP to have
44 been for a single year, he is uncertain there would be two bids to consider. He cannot imagine purchasing a
45 whole fleet of buses and getting new drivers based on a one-year contract.

46
47 Mr. Solon noted a motion to award the contract to Butler Transportation, under the present terms, failed. Being
48 considered is whether the contract will be awarded to Hollis Transportation. Based on the information provided
49 and what has been experienced, he is not comfortable making a three-year commitment with requirements that
50 have to occur to be able to provide the services at the bid price. He believes it to be a recipe for failure.

1
2 Chairman Fareed spoke of the bid specifications included in the RFP and stated uncertainty with what the Board
3 is legally obligated to do. She did not believe the option of choosing a one-year contract was available. Mr.
4 Solon questioned how the RFP was worded.

5
6 Superintendent Corey stated it to be a three-year agreement. Last year legal counsel sat down with Hollis
7 Transportation to discuss the contract. At that point, because the circumstances were beyond what the SAU
8 believed was contolled by the company with national driver shortages, etc. legal counsel advised to move
9 forward. A discussion took place with the owners who made some adjustment, e.g., retention incentives. If
10 they were unable to fulfill their responsibilities, the SAU could go back to legal counsel and pursue it in a
11 different manner. There are legal options available as there is an expectation for the contract to be fulfilled.

12
13 Mr. Solon stated a desire to go on record stating it really disturbs him that people are comfortable with budget
14 impacts and losses of this kind for athletic fields and other things, but not for transportation, which has been a
15 major topic of discussion and disheartenment for years.

16
17 Mr. Cross commented the Board could potentially not vote at this time, and ask Hollis Transportation to return
18 with a one-year bid, address some of the issues discussed in tangible ways, and have a vote on the contract in
19 the near future.

20
21 Ms. Marsano noted Brookline is having its Deliberative Session next Thursday. There is the need to identify
22 the cost for transportation.

23
24 Chairman Fareed commented even if that were to occur, the Governing Board would have to be able to meet
25 again prior to next Thursday to vote on a contract.

26
27 Superintendent Corey suggested the result of the motion on the floor would provide an answer.

28 **MOTION CARRIED**

29 **7.2 / 1.8**

30 *Members Solon, Brown, and Cross voted in opposition*

31
32 **ADJOURNMENT**

33
34 **MOTION BY MEMBER MANN TO ADJOURN**

35 **MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BROWN**

36 **MOTION CARRIED**

37 **9-0**

38
39 The January 3, 2019 special meeting of the SAU 41 Governing Board was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

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42
43 Date: _____

Signed: _____