

TEAM MEETING MINUTES

FCPS BUS FACILITY PROJECT

MARCH 3, 2016

Present were:

Mark Maggitti
Amanda Rhoderick
W. Todd Eudy
Steven Bolling
Pam Wein
Beth Pasierb
Tom Buckley
Ruth Biser

Discussion

1. Welcome and recap
2. Discussion of draft communications plan

Ms. Nelson reviewed the responsibilities for the methods of communication with the transportation department staff and drivers. Basic communication will be through emails. There is the possibility of creating a video to show the daily work conditions of the bus garage. Mr. Maggitti suggested that the video might not be as comprehensive as photos or a PowerPoint. Ms. Nelson agreed there might be a combination of both. We need to show the driver's perspective, do we need to consider anything else? Mr. Bolling stated we need to make sure the drivers understand how their input will impact the decisions to be made –“How will these changes make my life easier?“ Mr. Maggitti said there may be some negative perceptions as to whether or not they will be able to take their buses home, or would they have to travel to a central location to get their bus. They need to know how they will benefit from the changes.

3. Discuss transportation department needs in more detail

Mr. Eudy asked how many buses are kept at home? Ms. Nelson said there are about 150, but they may still be able to park at their homes. The concern is more with those buses that have to be parked in schools lots, and the vandalism which occurs there. Mr. Bolling added that the drivers would probably prefer they be able to park close enough to the bus that it doesn't cost them more money out of their pocket. Mr. Maggitti said there will be some inefficiencies.

Ms. Pasierb asked if a driver is sick, what happens. Ms. Rhoderick said sometimes a sub will pick up the bus parked at the home, but others get one of the spare buses to use. Ms. Pasierb asked how many routes would benefit from a central parking area. Mr. Maggitti said it might allow the use of fewer spares. Mr. Eudy said they would also be serviced quicker. Mr. Maggitti said all services would improve.

Ms. Pasierb asked how many fewer spares would you need. Mr. Maggitti said our rule of thumb is to keep spares equal to 10% of the fleet, or 35 spares. We have a new rule which is a little higher. We might be able to reduce to 30, maybe more. Ms. Pasierb asked how many buses do we purchase each year, 30? Mr. Maggitti said yes, about that. We purchased 31 this year, and we would try to reduce our replacement to 12 years rather than 15 years. Ms. Pasierb asked how long do we run our replacements. Mr. Maggitti stated that the first date the bus is used to transport students determines the start for calculating the age of the bus. The average age of our fleet is 6-7 years.

Space – Mr. Maggitti stated the industry standard is one bay per 20 buses. Mr. Bolling asked how many bays do we need to service our 430 buses? These are things we need to address, to show our lack of bays. All buses have their oil changed twice a year. This takes about an hour, and we only have one service pit. Our hours of operation are 4 a.m. to 7 p.m. We need to show the inadequacy of the existing facility. Mr. Maggitti will develop a list of tasks to be done and the time it takes to do them.

Ms. Pasierb asked how many repairs do we have to send out? Mr. Maggitti said all engine repairs, body work and some warranty work are sent out. How many of these jobs being sent out could be handled in-house if we had the room? Mr. Maggitti said we would be able to do transmissions, non-warranty work and a large portion of the white fleet. Ms. Pasierb asked him to quantify the sub-contracted repairs. Ms. Wein said she and Mr. Maggitti will create a list. Mr. Maggitti said once we outsource for an inspection, we have them do whatever repairs are needed, rather than bringing the buses back. These could be done in-house if we had the space. Mr. Bolling added that the labor would be a large part of the outsourced costs which would become savings. Ms. Pasierb said we need to show the savings benefits of doing the work in-house, and how long it would take this savings to pay for the facility. Mr. Eudy said there would be capital and operational savings.

We would also need “quick service” data. Ms. Pasierb said we need to look at how many workman’s comp claims are due to hazards associated with the conditions of the bus facility. Mr. Maggitti will check with Jen.

He will also begin tracking buses put out of service daily for the time of the first phase. Mr. Buckley asked that when buses are placed out of service, how much of that time is waiting for parts. Mr. Maggitti asked how far back should I go? Ms. Nelson suggested he start now for a snapshot, but maybe go back 2 years.

Mr. Eudy suggested we need to show the impact of going to two shifts in the garage. (Two shifts started in November of 2013.) Because of the inability to wash the buses in-house, how does this affect rust. Mr. Maggitti said rust is an issue with fuel tanks and brake lines. In addressing the complaint of dirty engines, how do we clean engines? Testerman cleans engines, and we have them clean the engines after they have had to do a repair.

Another loss of time is the “shuffling” that is necessary. When a higher priority repair comes in, the bus in the bay has to be backed out and parked so the higher priority can be worked on. Sometimes these buses are not running and have to be pushed out of the bay. The bus has to be backed out due to lack of tool storage in the bay.

Our lack of space means we cannot keep much inventory, and what we have can't be organized very well. We need more space for inventory, because there is not enough space to categorize the parts and it is hard to find things when they are needed. Parts get mixed up, and there is no security. Ms. Pasierb asked do we have many losses? Ms. Wein stated we currently have a \$16,000 adjustment for the past 6 months. Mr. Maggitti said this can be for a lot of reasons. We need expansion for parts inventory, and a new data entry tracking system would help. Ms. Nelson asked is there an industry standard for loss? Mr. Buckley said there is. Ms. Wein said some of our difficulty is due to using the county tracking system the way they have it set up. We would like to set it up differently, but we can't. Mr. Maggitti said our own program would be very helpful.

Ms. Pasierb asked does the method of storage being used now affect the life of the tires? Mr. Maggitti said not really, since we go through tires too quickly to have issues. It does, however, affect the inflation of new tires. We could also realize a savings if we could buy our tires by the truckload, but we don't have room to store them at this time. Ms. Pasierb said we need to determine the savings of buying in bulk versus our current rate of purchase. Mr. Maggitti will check the costs of buying in bulk. Ms. Nelson added that we need to determine the time lost to retrieve parts.

Routing and Dispatch – Ms. Pasierb asked how many drivers do you talk to each day? Ms. Rhoderick said approximately 15 per day. Early in the school year, it is many more. We have 3 route managers and 2 dispatchers. How many do you need to call? The longer distance drivers are called, about 25% of the drivers. Dispatch typically has 5 to 15 substitute drivers waiting to be assigned to work each day due to the need for another driver, or route changes. Utility substitute drivers are fulltime and on call every day. We need space for these waiting drivers. We could use more than one radio line, and there are areas of poor reception. Satellite facilities could have their own channel.

4. Assignment of data collection duties

The attached spreadsheet shows a list of issues that we have discussed in the meetings so far, with the information we will need to collect to demonstrate this need and who can obtain it.

5. Next Steps

There was discussion of the need for a bus driver focus group. Also, the group would like to see other bus facilities. Suggestions were to see the new Baltimore County school bus facility and Baltimore City municipal facility. Also, Washington County has a new bus facility. CMI, Colonial and Freightliner were also suggested. Tours will be set up for Thursday mornings.

The next meetings of the group will be March 17 and March 31.