

# *City of Brisbane*

## *Agenda Report*

To: City Council via City Manager

From: Stuart Schillinger, Administrative Services Director

Subject: Discussion of Providing Bus Transportation from Brisbane to Oceana and Terra Nova High Schools

Date: June 30, 2016

### **Purpose:**

Ensure High School students in Brisbane have a safe and reliable method to get to and from any High School within the Jefferson Union High School District.

### **Recommendation:**

Direct staff regarding the next steps related to daily school bus service to and from Oceana and Terra Nova High Schools.

### **Background:**

In 2010, due financial considerations, the Jefferson Union High School District decided not to provide bus service to and from Brisbane to Terra Nova and Oceana High Schools. Prior to that time the City paid the school \$30,000 a year to support the regular bus service and \$23,500 to fully fund the late bus. In 2010 the School District said the full cost of both services were approximately \$110,000 and given other reductions in revenues the District could no longer afford the additional \$57,000 a year in costs.

Staff contracted with CYO to provide bus service at a cost of \$81,000 a year starting in the school year of 2010/11. This service has been in effect with annual increases in cost through the school year of 2015/16. The current cost of the service is approximately \$90,000 a year a portion of which (about \$12,000) is recovered in fees.

Last school year we had 32 Brisbane residents ride the bus to Terra Nova and 8 Brisbane residents ride the bus to Oceana. In addition to this we provided service to 15 Daly City residents and 2 South San Francisco students. We charge all students the same fee of about \$450 a year with a reduction in cost if they are on the reduced lunch program and no cost if they are on the free lunch program. The full cost of the program is \$1,666 dollars per rider if the bus has 54 students on it. We are therefore subsidizing each student between the full \$1,666 to \$1,200 a year.

At the end of the school year CYO contacted staff and said they would no longer be providing bus service to and from Brisbane to Terra Nova and Oceana High Schools. The reason for this were discipline and behavioral issues on the bus which the drivers felt created unsafe conditions. There has been a situation which has persisted over the years and was not a single incident although at one point there was a fight on the bus. The students involved in the fight were suspended from the bus for two weeks.

## **Discussion:**

Staff has been investigating other alternatives for providing transportation.

1. We have contacted Sam Trans. Sam Trans currently provides a bus from Brisbane which goes to Westmoor and Jefferson High Schools. This bus originally only went to Jefferson. Staff worked with Sam Trans to have the bus also drive to Westmoor as well. We are waiting for Sam Trans to get back to us. Currently the 110 leaving the BART station in Daly City provides service to Oceana High School and allows for a connection to Terra Nova.
2. We have contacted MV Transportation, who provides shuttle service within Brisbane, and are waiting for information back from them as well.
3. The City has contacted the Jefferson Union High School District to see what the current cost for them to provide bus service. They are in the middle of transitioning their superintendant but the Assistant for the Superintendent said she would pass the request to him after he was appointed and to the appropriate staff within the District. We are still waiting to hear back from the School District.
4. We have contacted a number of independent bus companies in the Bay Area and have heard back from three of them. All three provide this type of service in other areas and are willing to do it for Brisbane students for around \$90,000 a year.
5. The City could facilitate setting up carpools for the parents to bring students to and from the High Schools in Pacifica.

In the past the City and CYO has allowed students to ride the bus without a pass for the first two weeks of school. The reason for this is, the School District is the entity which collects the money for bus passes and since the school isn't in session we allow a grace period to purchase passes. We have also in the past allowed parents to pay on an annual, semi-annual, and quarterly basis. The parents have not always been timely in making their payments. This has allowed students to ride the bus without a pass. The driver and the City has been hesitant to stop providing service to students whose parents have not paid since getting the student to and from school has been our highest priority. This may have added to the behavioral issues since some of the students may not have paid for the service. Staff would recommend that if we continue to provide the service we change our payment options to only annual payment. The payment must be made within the first week of the school year and only new students to the school district would be able to pay later. If a student does not pay they would be denied bus service.

The behavioral issues on the bus will need to be addressed in some fashion going forward. Staff has attached the current rules for the bus. The rules do cover the behavioral issues which the bus driver has faced. Unfortunately, the bus driver is not always aware of who is creating the disturbance since their primary focus is driving safely. Therefore, it is difficult for the driver to inform the City and the School about specific people or instances. If the City maintains responsibility for the transportation of students in addition to sending the rules to all parents we will also hand out the rules to students during the first week of school. We would assign our Recreation Coordinator in charge of teen programs to be the liaison with the bus company since he is more aware of who the students are and interacts with them at other times.

The last question the Council may wish to address is allowing non-Brisbane residents to ride the bus. As stated above we allow Brisbane residents, and students of Brisbane employee to have first right to seats on the bus. We allow them to ride for the two week grace period. After the two weeks are up we allow non-Brisbane residents to sign up for the bus service. These students need to have permission from the City to get a bus pass from the school. They pay the same amount as Brisbane residents, about \$450 for annual pass unless they are on a reduced or free lunch program. This past year this

method resulted in more than 54 students on the bus (the maximum number of students if there were two to a seat), because students moved into Brisbane during the school year and rode the bus after it was "full". The behavioral issues we have faced over the years has not been from non-Brisbane residents specifically, the incident report to the City regarding the fight involved 4 Brisbane residents. However, with less people on the bus there may be less interactions between students resulting in fewer instances of misbehavior. However, the City would lose some revenue since these students pay about \$4,500. It would also mean a number of students who currently use our bus service would need to find alternative transportation to the school. The options for Council are to provide bus service only to Brisbane residents and students of people who work in Brisbane, limit the number of students from outside the City to reserve seats for students who move into Brisbane later in the year. For instance allow only 50 students to sign up for the bus at the beginning of the year, or keep the current practice. If the Council chooses to keep the current practice then the next question is do we want to subsidize non Brisbane residents. The current subsidy is about \$1,200 a student. So Council could decide that all non-Brisbane residents and non-Brisbane employee's children pay \$1,600 a year regardless of their lunch status.

**Fiscal Impact:**

The City has budgeted \$90,000 for this service for next fiscal year. Therefore, there are options for the City to persue wihin budget.

**Measure of Success**

The students in Brisbane have a safe transporation method to get to and from Oceana and Terra Nova schools.



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