

Approved Minutes
SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL MEETING
Albany Area Schools – ISD #745
District Office Board Room
December 6, 2023

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Hansen at 4 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Hansen, Rueter, Carbajal, Sand, Dirkes

Late: Sands

Absent: Kreuzer

3. Bid Meeting with Palmer Bus Service, Inc.

Representatives from Palmer bus met with the board to review a set of predetermined questions. Some key aspects the Board learned are as follows:

Palmer would bring in three new buses. All buses have internet, up to date technology and have an app on buses for parents to monitor where their child is. All buses have cameras and stop arm cameras. They also have monthly online training for drivers.

Paid training programs would be offered for new/prospective drivers. There is a monthly incentive program for the drivers. Palmer clarified that no drivers would be sent to another district to drive unless they want to. Per rules, all drivers will have to apply for their position, but they expect a 100% hire rate of our staff who are interested in joining their team.

Palmer has seen, on average, a 3%-4% increase per year in contracts with other districts. They will have a diesel mechanic on site and a regional manager.

Palmer has their own recruiter to find drivers and has 21 office staff who can drive in a shortage. In the past Palmer has paid drivers from other areas to drive when there is a shortage of drivers, at times even putting them up in a hotel until new staff are trained. That all comes at the cost to the company, not the district.

Palmer would not do a phased implementation as they have not found it to be a good practice for drivers, schools or the company.

4. Bid Meeting with 4 Point O School Services, Inc.

Mike, Bill, Bob, Lizzie, McKayla represented 4.0, most of which are part of the family business.

4.0 does not have drivers go to other districts to drive unless they want to. Sometimes this is an opportunity that is very attractive to some drivers. However, Albany drivers will drive Albany routes.

4.0 plans to review our buses but expects about 50% new fleet of (gas, not diesel) buses within the first 2-3 years. They too would have a local site manager and mechanic on site.

All 4.0 buses have cameras on buses and a stop arm, will use our current bus shed until the district determines that the bus shed would be needed for other district uses.

4.0 has seen, on average, a 2%-3% increase per year with other districts.

4.0 recruits their own drivers and pays for them to be trained.

4.0 would look at phased implementation, however, they would like a limited timeline and stressed that a full implementation is the best for the district, drivers and the company based on past experiences. They will also transition back to the district control if we want our buses back.

When asked about the ability to fully staff the district's needs, 4.0 shared that they have never in their lengthy history missed an AM, PM or sports route for which they have committed. They don't intend to allow that to happen, and they all said that their leadership has bus licenses and have all driven buses in districts when needed.

Albany drivers would drive Albany routes and buses would be labeled as Albany Area Schools.

4.0 also shared how they work hard to be supportive of the community by being involved in parades, joining local organizations, and giving back when they are able. They also spoke about the idea of building a facility in the community at some point in the future and working to hire local individuals. When working to repair buses, 4.0 also spoke about their interest in working with the local company the district currently uses (Ramler) when specific repairs are needed.

5. Adjournment

Agenda completed at 5:43 p.m.

Amy Sand, Clerk