City of Brisbane
Agenda Report

To: City Council via City Manager

From: Stuart Schillinger, Administrative Services Director

Subject: Update of the Terra Nova and Oceana High School Bus

Date: March 2, 2017

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:

Receive update regarding bus service to and from Terra Nova and Oceana High Schools. Provide direction as appropriate.

Background:

In 2010, due to 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 $98,000 a year a portion of which (about $12,000) is recovered in fees.

At the end of the 15/16 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 reasons for this were discipline and behavioral issues on the bus which the drivers felt created unsafe conditions. MetroTrans agreed to work with us given they have a bus yard near Brisbane, and felt that supporting the surrounding community would be opportune. The current contract with them was for $100,000 for six hours of bus service a day.

City staff has experienced many challenges in working with MetroTrans in the first few months of the contract period. Being that their company mostly serves the San Francisco School District, their employees work in accordance with the San Francisco School District schedule. City staff has experienced poor communication regarding the scheduling which has resulted in disruptions of service. The lapse of service has negatively impacted the schools and students using this method of transportation.

City staff spoke with MetroTrans in December and they confirmed that their company was not interested in renewing their contract for the 17/18 school year. They felt that the route is dangerous and their drivers have contended with behavioral challenges from students.

Recently MetroTrans suspended the late bus due to a lack of drivers being willing to take the route. They did this without informing either the School District or the City. The City Attorney has worked with the bus company to restore this service. The solution was to put another adult on the bus to monitor behavior. The cost to the City for this additional service is $37 an hour.

At the January 5, 2017 Council meeting the Council requested the City's 2x2 committee meet with the members of the Jefferson Union High School District Board and the Superintendent to discuss possible solutions to providing transportation from Brisbane to Terra Nova and Oceana High Schools and back. The City Council expressed their desire to end paying for the bus service in the near future. Instead the Council wanted to use the funds for its original purpose, funding academic opportunities in the High Schools.

Discussion:

The meeting between the City Council subcommittee and the JUHSD subcommittee took place on February 15, 2017. The subcommittee expressed City Council's desire to continue to have bus service available to all four high schools within the district but stated that the City would like to no longer be the provider of the service and instead contribute money to the school district for academic purposes as it did prior to needing to pay for the bus. The School District informed the City's subcommittee that they do not provide bus service except as required by law to a limited number of students. The School District contracts with a private provider for their Athletic programs so it does not own school buses directly.

During the conversation there was a discussion of the financial situation of the School District. The School District is a Revenue Limited District. This means the District receives money based on actual attendance at the schools and not based on property tax received. The amount the State pays for each student is approximately $11,000. The subcommittee also learned by having Shasta High School located in Daly City, it is eligible for additional State funding that it wouldn't be otherwise if it was located in Brisbane.

The JUHSD Board of Trustees committed to discussing the accessibility of High Schools from Brisbane at a future board meeting. This discussion will include any and all options that may be available including, but not limited to; the City of Brisbane phasing out of contracting for the bus service over the next year or so (if a vendor can even be contracted), the JUHSD contracting bus service with the financial support from the City of Brisbane, the JUHSD looking into student transportation as a whole, and working with the City and the Brisbane Elementary School District to support Brisbane students in selecting one of the Daly City schools to attend instead of the Pacifica schools.

Fiscal Impact:

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

Measure of Success

The students in Brisbane have a safe transportation method to get to and from High School

Stuart Schillinger
Administrative Services Director

Clay Holstine
City Manager