## Utah Pupil Transportation Advisory Committee Utah State Office of Education (USOE) October 10, 2013, Basement East Conference Room Minutes

Attendees: Superintendent Dave Brotherson, Ivan Christensen, Dan Ellis, Murrell Martin, Superintendent Rick Nielsen, Wynn Porter, Dave Roberts, Tandalaya Stitt, Matt White

- 9:00 Welcome Facilitator, Murrell Martin USOE Pupil Transportation Specialist
- 9:02 Introductions
- 9:05 Minutes Review and Approval Superintendent Brotherson had a question about grants that electrical companies are receiving for using better fuel vehicles. They (Duchesne) have been contacted about CNG but that's an issue with cold weather in the basin and he will keep the committee informed. Murrell let him know that propane seems to be a cold weather option. Wynn motion to approve. Matt second.
- 9:15 Progress report on the current 2013 Legislative Productivity Audit on Pupil Transportation Murrell Martin The legislative auditors focus has shifted to how we track and identify students transported. We have identified areas of improvement: sometimes data gets duplicated, there's a question of if it should be counted on AM or PM (arguments for both), etc. They are putting a recommendation together. This team was unaware of the audit that was conducted on Pupil Transportation four years ago.
- 9:20 Report on current State Board Position on \$20 million One-time funding – David Roberts – Because of the amount of attention being paid to clean air, he was given direction to come up with a proposal for legislators so they would have this in mind when they looked at funding. The proposal outlines ways that we could be part of the team to provide clean air (\$13 million for buses, \$7 million for infrastructure). We addressed the issue with the amount of buses that are still using "dirty diesel." We have the potential to replace approximately 1/3 of these buses. The best way to approach this is with a 50/50 match, through an RFP process, with the districts. That allows the school district to replace two buses for the cost of one. We are not just focusing on CNG; we have included propane and clean diesel as well. Superintendent Nielsen asked if the buses were Part A and the infrastructure Part B; those that tap into the \$13million are then eligible for the \$7 million. Dave R. explained that, yes, it's on a needed basis. Murrell explained that some buses, those used as backups, aren't included on the list for replacement consideration. Dave R. added that legislators may be more concerned about the districts in Salt Lake Valley because that's where most of the dirty air tends to be, but our position is for it to be available to all school districts. He also mentioned that the Air Quality Mitigation bill included Duchesne, Uintah, Cache, and Logan so those are also areas of concern. His assumptions are that the priorities would be, first, those that are part of that bill, and second, where they could have the highest impact. Dave R. wanted to stress that this is statewide, not just the Wasatch Front. The recipients of the funds greatly depend on the rubric and grading system. Superintendent Nielsen also questioned the plan for those districts that can't meet the 50 percent match. Dave R. suggested maybe adding the daily mileage as part of the rubric and then scaling the match depending on need. Dave R. mentioned that we are looking at this as a three-year tier project. The goal is to request \$20million an additional two years. Superintendent Brotherson asked about federal funding. Murrell mentioned that we replaced 26 buses four years ago with EPA grants. He said there may be a possibility of it out there but that those funds have been drying up. Superintendent Brotherson thinks that partnering is a good idea; city, school district, county. Dave R. agreed. He said that if it's possible, we should make this a benefit for the whole. Would it be possible to have a fast-fill pump outside of the fence for the general public to be able to use. Murrell mentioned that financing the 50 percent is also an option. Dave R. suggested, since buses can only be purchased with Capital Outlay, that maybe we could look at an option, as part of the proposal, over the next three years you could use some funds from General Fund just for

purchasing buses. This proposal will be presented to the Business Administrators (BAs) at the fall UASBO conference.

Discussion of other individuals and agencies that seem to be in support

Strategy for Awareness and support

9:45 On-going funding need summary sheet discussion – Murrell Martin – Last year was the first year that we received an increase in relation to the increase of WPU. We feel like that's in place but there's a problem with the gap of what was lost. There's a difference between what's in the code of 85 percent funding and where we're funded at. The high, in 2006, was 79 percent and we're down to 63 percent. There's a \$20 million gap between 85 percent funding and where we've been funded. This is a different source of funding than the one-time \$20 million funding.

Strategy for Awareness and Support – We need to make sure this doesn't get lost in the shuffle for clean air. Wynn's biggest concern is that they're looking at the Capital Outlay for next summer already and asking for funds for a bus may take a large chunk. If the gap is left there, districts will be hard pressed to come up with matching funds. Dan suggested looking at those that could actually meet the match, if not; both could sink without a proper balance. Wynn mentioned looking at a two-thirds/one-third match. Murrell suggested conducting a survey at UASBO to find out how many could access funds and what are the impacts. Superintendent Nielsen said it's easier to get systemic support of the on-going funds. Wynn suggested tying driver retention into the on-going funds. We have to remember the human element in this. Superintendent Nielsen doesn't think this is possible because of the constant tension between the legislature and local boards.

10:05 Summary Sheet of Proposed Advisory Committee Changes to the Final Cap – Matt White – The objective is to look this over and determine a couple of things; is it relevant or important to the funding formula? How we address it this year versus how we may address it next year. As a background, in the fall, districts submit an A1 report that projects what their miles and minutes will be within the period of time set by statute; the day school begins to October 1st. Then, in the summer, they provide us with a report with the actual miles a bus went. For the cap, we use the total odometer minus "other" miles; field trips, activities, summer programs, repair, training, etc. What is left is what is used as "to and from" miles. What we're proposing is that, if it's an over projection (a negative number), we cap it. The cap is based on the total odometer that was turned in and the actual possible "to and from" mileage. Then, we figure, if they've made an error on their miles, they have probably also made an error on their minutes. Based on their A1 report, the projected "to and from" miles, we're looking at the ratio between miles and minutes. Your ratio shows how many minutes you could have actually gone. We would cap the minutes based on the ratio. Murrell explained that providing the districts prior year data allows them to better project. They have been able to use that data as a tool to alert them of any mistakes they may have made. This also allows us to target some for reviews. Matt explained that at the last meeting they discussed a 5 percent or \$50,000 cap. His spreadsheets showed a few different scenarios. Murrell stated that the question is should we apply an actual cap across the board this year, or to start next year? Dan mentioned that the purpose for the 5 percent or \$50,000 was to catch the obvious differences. Part of the discussion was that the funds had already been set, and budgets were already in place, and we didn't want to go back and punish anyone. This allows a little leeway for the transition. Going forward, the 5 percent is a great auditing flag. Murrell asked how the group felt about presenting this to BAs. Superintendent Nielsen proposes doing the intermediate step because he feels that this is better as a conceptual presentation. People tend to look at their line item, and how they're affected, to sway their vote. On Dan's recommendation, at the previous meeting, they have started to share the audit findings with the BAs. Superintendent Nielsen motions to approve the 5% or \$50,000 and Wynn seconds it. The vote was unanimous.

## 10:30 Break

10:45 Discussion of Cap Applications to the FY2014 Funding and Future Years – Murrell Martin – What we're going into is the projection in the fall, our audit cycle, the final balancing and addressing it with districts, then closing it by October. There are no adjustments after that. The secondary proposal would be to transition to a complete cap. Superintendent Nielsen is a little hesitant to say that we should definitively do that because we might see something in the 5/50 that requires being looked at. There's the possibility that one year out may be a little tight for a timeline.

Motion to approve final funding cap for FY2014 – Superintendent Nielsen motions to do 5%/\$50,000 for FY2014 with a finish line of FY2016 Superintendent Brotherson seconds it. The vote was unanimous.

11:00 Discussion When to do Annual Updates to the Average Cost per Minute/Mile – Murrell Martin

Motion on when in most appropriate to update annually – *Superintendent Brotherson motions to approve adjusting them annually one year, but adjusting it for the Spring estimate and the Fall, then picking it up the next year to do it in that cycle. Ivan seconds it. The vote was unanimous.* 

- 11:20 Other items for discussion Dave and Murrell had a discussion about a need for increased collaboration and communication between pupil transportation and the BAs. Murrell has suggested having a three-hour prelegislation update meeting and inviting UASBO and UAPT to present. Superintendent Nielsen suggested tying that into the time that the BAs will be attending the USBA meeting January 9-10, 2014.
- 12:00 Determine coordination needed and need for next meeting *It was suggested not to meet again until after the Legislative session unless a need arose.*
- 12:00 Dismiss