



## MINUTES

### Indiana State School Bus Committee

June 5, 2012

The Indiana State School Bus Committee met for a regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, June 5, 2012 at the Department of Education office in Indianapolis, Indiana with the following members in attendance.

#### **VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Danny Libs – Chairman  
Dwayne Vandiver – Sch. Trans. Assoc. of Ind.  
Joey Dallas – Ind. School Boards Assoc.  
Ron Chew – Ind. Assoc. of School Bus Drivers

#### **NON-VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mark Clawson – Ind. Twnshp. Assoc.  
John Perkins – IASBO  
Kent McDaniel – Ind. Trans. Assoc.  
Sgt. Steve Whitaker – ISP  
Clifford Zehr – Ind. Assoc. of Sch. Bus  
Dist.

#### **VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Shannon Dickson – BMV  
Claudia Koerner – Ind. Dept. of Revenue  
Dr. Robert Taylor – Pub. Sch. Superintendent  
Assoc.  
Dr. Joseph O’Neil – Governor’s Council on  
Impaired & Dangerous Drivers  
Carl Brown – Indiana School for the Deaf &  
Indiana School for the Blind

#### **NON-VOTING MEMBERS ABSENT:**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Mr. LaRocco called roll. Two guests were present; Mr. Randall White, with the Indiana Department of Education and Ms. Cheryl Wolfe.

One change was noted from the March 6, 2012 minutes with Mr. John Rahn accidentally missed from the roll of members. Mr. Dallas moved to approve the minutes as revised, Mr. Vandiver seconded the motion to approve; motion carried.

#### **Items of Information**

Mr. LaRocco introduced Carrie Duthie as the new Staff/Committee Secretary. Approval from Dr. Bennett is still pending.

Mr. LaRocco informed the Committee that Mr. John Rahn representing the Indiana School for the Deaf and the Indiana School for the Blind had resigned his position on the Committee. Mr. Carl Brown had been recommended to replace Mr. Rahn. Approval from Dr. Bennett is still pending.

### **Items of Action**

Mr. LaRocco reviewed the document of Notice of Intent to Adopt a Rule in reference to the revision of current school bus standards noted as 575 IAC Rules 1 through 7, and the removal of redundancies and recodify Rules 1 through 8. Statutory authority: IC 20-27-3-4. IDOE Counsel, Michelle Gough, advised the Committee that once filed the Committee has 360 days to complete the process. Mr. Chew made a motion to initiate the Notice of Intent to Adopt a Rule; Mr. Dallas seconded; motion passed.

### **Items of discussion**

The Miller Transportation fatality on March 12, 2012 was reviewed by Mr. LaRocco and Sgt. Steve Whitaker. Final toxicology information is not available at this time, however no mechanical issues were found and no abnormal activities were detected via the on-board camera. The driver and a female passenger were killed by crushing injuries from the bulkhead.

The committee reviewed the video footage from June 5, 2012 of the Carmel bus driver who was not wearing his seat belt and struck a house after being thrown from his air-ride driver seat. The driver had struck the curb after making a right hand turn.

Legislative updates were presented by Mike LaRocco.

Bus Specification Review and Update is currently being conducted across the state by Mike LaRocco. Some requested revisions include the following:

- Phase out manual transmissions
- Phase out hydraulic brakes – this may initiate a request to the BMV to grandfather current drivers from hydraulic brakes to air brakes with passing the written test only and not be required to pass the skills and driving test.
- Allow width to go from current 96” to 102”

Revisions include Special Needs equipment and accommodations. Cheryl Wolf addressed the Committee that a new federal law is under review that will not allow the exclusion or isolation of children with disabilities. The use of safety seats was discussed.

The use of Electronic Stability Control (ESC) systems was proposed by Mike LaRocco. Should Indiana be ahead of the national application for this safety feature?

With this revision, all school bus specifications will be combined into one comprehensive document. This document will be connected to the Indiana State Police Inspection documents to have a consistent application of specs to inspection.

The current Bus Driver Certification Process was discussed in that a new/training driver can drive a bus with students on board on a Blue Card and while in training to drive. Mike LaRocco inquired about when the current process was adopted. Mr. LaRocco agreed to provide process revisions for the committee to review.

Sgt. Steve Whitaker discussed M & M Bus Company in Muncie, Indiana. The company has recorded 10 crashes between January to April 2012. They experienced 3 crashes in one week. Does this activity require scrutiny from the Committee or the DOE Office of School Transportation? Should the Committee consider recommending additional training?

Mr. Libbs suggested the company's insurance carrier would be the better organization to drive for training. It was proposed by Mr. Libbs that either Sgt. Whitaker or Mr. LaRocco contact the school/company and let them know we are aware of their poor driving record.

The May 2012 Indiana Stop Arm violation statistics were reviewed. It was noted that stop-arm violation enforcement is not consistent across the state. Some agencies require a photo of the violation with the license plate and the driver's face, other agencies will pursue with only a license plate number from the bus driver.

Legislative Issues for 2013 – Mike LaRocco presented the 2013 Legislative proposals

- Stop Arm Violations - a standard code enforcement for stop arm violators so that with only the license plate number a violation with a fine only for the car owner, but no points added to the license.
- Title 20 Physical- Amend current statute so that a nurse practitioner or physician assistant could also sign the physical form in addition to a physician. This will more closely mirror the CDL physical.
- Special Purpose Buses – Currently Special Purpose Buses do not have to meet same standards as school buses, but we are holding the inspection the same. Proposing to require Special Purpose Buses be built and inspected to the same specification as a school bus. (IC 20-27-7-8 Sec 8.)
- Seat Belt Restraints – Proposing to conform all seat belt restraint language so it reads more consistently.
- Child restraint systems blocking emergency exits - The law does not specifically identify restraints as blockage. The Committee does not consider a child in a restraint system and/or the restraint systems themselves to be considered blockage.
- Display of District Number on rear of bus – The initial purpose of adding the district numbers to the rear of the bus was to assist emergency responders in identifying the ownership of the school bus. Most police agencies, including the Indiana State Police, are not aware of the number corresponding to specific school districts. The Committee authorizes the addition of the school's name (with abbreviation) in lieu of the number system.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, September 4, 2012 at the Department of Education in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Without further business to discuss, Mr. Dallas made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Chew; motion carried.

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Chairman

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Secretary

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Date