

Subject: Fwd: Electric Bus / Finance Comm Mtg 6/14/23
From: Eric Bush <bushe@mokena159.org>
Date: 6/19/2023, 8:11 PM
To: Lisa Zielinski <zielinskil@mokena159.org>

FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Kelli MacMillan <macmillank@mokena159.org>
Date: Mon, Jun 19, 2023 at 7:01 AM
Subject: Electric Bus / Finance Comm Mtg 6/14/23
To: Mark Cohen <cohenm@mokena159.org>
CC: Eric Bush <bushe@mokena159.org>

Good morning Dr. Cohen,

A couple things I wanted to bring to you, for further dissemination as you see fit.

I've reviewed the Electric Bus grant opportunity and I'm having trouble reconciling a few key points. Are we positive we are a candidate for this grant and have we confirmed the intel we've received?

First and foremost I don't see us listed as a priority district as was discussed in the Finance Committee meeting. I thought it was odd that we weren't notified directly that we are a priority district. Did we verify that?

(See attached list / snip below)

What are priority school districts?



The EPA has designated certain school districts whose applications will be given priority and who are eligible for higher funding levels based on Congressional guidance. These priority districts are high-need school districts and low-income areas, with an expanded definition (compared to the first rebate round) including large public school districts, rural school districts, Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded school districts, and school districts that receive basic support payments for children who reside on Indian land.

School districts only need to meet one of these criteria in order to be considered a prioritized school district under the grant program. A list of priority school districts can be found [here](#).

In this grant round of funding, priority districts are eligible for up to \$395,000 per electric school bus, which can be used for the purchase of an electric school bus and the associated charging infrastructure. School districts that don't meet the priority district criteria are eligible for up to \$250,000 per electric school bus. You can see the full breakdown on page 10 of the EPA's [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#).

Next, I see below there is a core requirement that the bus replaced must be "in service" at the time of application (see highlighted below). This doesn't align with what we'd discussed in the Finance meeting. Are we certain we can wait to purchase the used bus after we've been approved for the grant?

Eligible Old School Buses to be Replaced

To be eligible for replacement, old school buses must:

- Be vehicle model year 2010 or older diesel-powered school buses that will be scrapped if selected for funding
 - If a fleet has no eligible 2010 or older diesel school buses and is requesting zero-emission school bus replacements, the fleet can either:
 1. Scrap 2010 or older non-diesel internal combustion engine buses; or
 2. Scrap, sell, or donate 2011 or newer diesel or non-diesel internal combustion engine buses
- Have a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 10,001 lbs. or more
- Be operational at the time of application submission – Able to start, move in all directions, and have all operational parts
- Have provided bus service to a public school district for at least 3 days/week on average during the 2022/2023 school year at the time of applying, excluding COVID or disaster-related school closures

Also, this is minor but I wanted to point out there may be a requirement for the person(s) installing the charging station and the manufacturer:

3. All electricians installing, operating, or maintaining EVSE must meet one of the following requirements: (i) Certification from the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program (EVITP), OR (ii) Graduation or a continuing education certificate from a registered apprenticeship program for electricians that includes charger-specific training and is developed as a part of a national guideline standard approved by the Department of Labor in consultation with the Department of Transportation. For projects requiring more than one electrician, at least one electrician must meet the requirements above, and at least one electrician must be enrolled in an electrical registered apprenticeship program. In limited circumstances, EPA may provide an exception to the above requirements for grantees that can demonstrate there are no electricians meeting the above requirements available in their area, and that efforts to train local electricians to meet the requirements are not feasible. EVITP certification of electricians working on a CSB-funded project is an allowable use as defined in the NOFO.
4. Applicants should be aware that Build America, Buy America requirements apply to eligible vehicle charging infrastructure equipment.

You might consider taking a look at this website that offers a free 30 min. consultation to school districts:

<https://electricschoolbusinitiative.org/talk-expert>

Here is a decision tree for reference, which essentially stems from being a priority district:

<https://electricschoolbuses4kids.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/AESB-Guidance-EPA-Clean-School-Bus-Program-2023-Grants-Decision-Tree.pdf>

As I said in our Finance Committee meeting, on the surface, having an opportunity to get a grant for a bus we'll need to buy anyway sounds like something we might want to pursue. I am not confident, however, based on what I've read that this is a fit for us, are you?

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't provide some feedback to you also, on the Finance Committee meeting last week. I hope that we can all value and grow from constructive feedback.

Overall, there was an obvious lack of preparation for that meeting, on our part. We had a lot of people that took time away from their families to attend, with short notice. Not only were we unprepared, but the representative that was brought in to answer our questions was unprepared and not entirely knowledgeable or reliable himself - which we should have vetted. Unfortunately, it seemed like the majority of everyone, including the administration, was starting from a blank sheet trying to learn about the opportunity. The administration however, should have done all of that background research and should have understood the topic thoroughly before bringing it to the BOE, there was ample time. This would have allowed us to capitalize on the meeting we had with the BOE/Finance Committee members and really dig in to ensure decisions are sound and well supported.

Here are some items we should have distributed to committee participants in advance of the meeting, some of which I'd requested:

1. A copy of the grant opportunity.
2. A graphical timeline of related events/actions showing what would happen, when, how, by whom
3. Scenario folded into our current transportation plan and what that would look like
4. Scenario folded into our current financial projections (including researched & supported maintenance costs) and what that would look like
5. Preliminary /informal vendor written cost estimate(s) for charging station / other costs associated with owning a bus (e.g. batteries, tires, etc.).

I am willing and able to help anytime, in developing a data set / information packet moving forward for any meeting. In the meantime, I will also try to provide you with a list of guiding principles I use when preparing information reports for a board/owner, which is what I use in my reviews. I think that will be helpful for you to anticipate some of the questions I'll have in BOE packets instead of being left with a long list and a short amount of time. I know that is not ideal for anyone and I also realize this will all be a process that happens over time.

Please let me know what you find out about the grant and if I can help in any way.

I will send a separate email later today (asap) with my questions on the packet.

Thanks for your work on this,
Kelli MacMillan

— Attachments: —

fy23-csb-prioritized-detailed-list-2023-04.xlsx

750 KB