

Transit-Vancouver : Message: BBC vs Flyer

December-28-07
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Message #18565 of 18565

Re: Fuel costs
--- In [Transit-Vancouver@yahoogleroups.com](#),
"Jim" <tovinman@...> wrote:

One of the sales reps at BBC who was involved in the whole Vancouver/Edmonton thing swore to me that Boveri was willing to Supply Flyer with units, that it was Flyer and Vancouvers' decision to package it as only/or, and the decision was eventually made to go only with Westinghouse, in Flyer bodies.

John D: That would probably square with BBC's perspective on things but what actually happened was that Flyer got wind of BBC's move to go prime with a GM body, and as a result Flyer declined to include BBC's equipment in its own bid (which had a couple of other electrical packages besides WH).

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Jim: The other option was a bit problematic. GM hadn't really been aware Of what 100 bus shells were going to be used for.

John: What? BBC, a well-known traction supplier, asks GM to build them some shells and they didn't clue in as to what was going on? Not likely. GM simply didn't want to undertake the responsibility for going prime on a bid that wasn't for off-the-shelf diesel buses, and which had some quite severe performance bond requirements, typical of traction procurements.

Jim: I think that if the order had been increased to 300 units, Edmonton's 100 plus the original Vancouver order, GM would have tanked completely on the idea of having 300 of their bus bodies as trolleys out there, so it's likely Vancouver never really had any chance of getting BBC/GM.

John: In which case there'd have been a rather lot of egg on BBC's face along with a forfeited bid bond. There was no indication at the time that BBC could not deliver 300 coaches and it was certainly treated that way in the evaluation process in which I took part.

Jim: Certainly the option order which resulted in 2904-2946 would have never been filled by BBC as they

barely got the 100 bus shells they needed to complete Edmonton's order out of GM before the latter pulled out of the deal entirely.

John: The option order resulted when Flyer realized it would be cheaper to provide brand new buses rather than rebuild the E800's with the WH equipment. BBC might have had a different result as they had experience with installing their equipment in an E800.

Jim: In the end, it was Westinghouse that shaved a few points off the price....

John: In the end, it (Flyer/WH) was the only bid that actually came close to conforming to spec. The GM body did not conform to spec in many areas and the bid was discounted and eventually eliminated on that basis.

Ironically, virtually all of the features that caused the GM body to be non-conforming were rectified in the Classic, which would have made an awesome trolleybus with BBC or WH equipment.

Edmonton's operating conditions were (are) different from ours. They'd likely still be buying fishbowls if they could. BBC cleverly realized that the Edmonton order would be sewn up if they offered a GM body. It could likely have been powered by a hamster, Edmonton would have bought it anyway.

What they miscalculated was the fact that the deficiencies in the obsolete GM body were sufficient in Vancouver to cause them to lose the race, even though they likely had an advantage with their equipment, having invested a lot of time and money with the 2601 prototype.

Flyer, on the other hand, correctly deduced that the new equipment had better handle crowds at least as well as a T48, and were prepared to re-engineer the 90x body to give us what we perceived we needed.

Of course, those issues are now irrelevant given the fact that vehicle design has been overwhelmed by the ADA issues imported from the States (don't get me started on that), and by a quaint fare system which basically kills off the advantages offered by dual-stream loading at busy stops.

Meantime, all the public notices is that each generation seems to offer fewer and fewer seats for their backsides.

Jim: Would Vancouver have suffered the exact same problems with a BBC/GM trolley that they have with the E901As? It's possible they would have, but to a much lesser degree.

John: The BBC buses were not without their own set of problems. One which was never fixed was the incredible noise they make. Trolleybuses are supposed to be silent servants and that is one attribute which justifies the price premium. The BBC's blowers made enough noise to make them almost as intrusive as a diesel bus.

Jim: The Flyer bodies have lasted 25 years, which is a lot longer than I gave them, having experienced all the problems with the D700A and D800 series up close, so I guess they've proved their worth despite all the problems.

John: We'd hoped for 30 when ordering them but perhaps that was a bit optimistic.

Interesting thought: if the BBC coaches being retired in Edmonton are still in good shape, maybe we should borrow or buy a couple dozen to get us through the gap between the supply of E40/60LFR's and what is needed out on the street. Silly idea? Yes, I think so.

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