

**CITY OF NORWALK  
BOE/BET JOINT STUDY GROUP  
REGULAR MEETING  
OCTOBER 21, 2010**

**ATTENDANCE:** Fred Wilms, Chair; Glenn Iannaccone, BOE Chair; Jody Bishop-Pullan, BOE Member; BOE Leo Mellow, BET; Joanne Romano, Council Member

**STAFF:** Thomas Hamilton, Finance Director; Fay Ruotolo, BOE Personnel; Robert Maslan, Corporation Counsel; Donna Vaccarella, BOE Finance; Dr. Dan Cooke, BOE Interim Finance Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Wilms called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 26, 2010**

**\*\* MR. IANNACCONO MOVED THE ITEM.**

Page 2, under Payroll Consolidation, paragraph 1; line 3: Please change the following from:

“The space occupied by Gilbane will be shifted to Norwalk High School.”

To :“Building Management will move to the first floor offices in City Hall previously occupied by Gilbane.”

**\*\* THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF AUGUST 26, 2010 AS CORRECTED PASSED WITH THREE IN FAVOR (WILMS, IANNACCONO, AND BISHOP-PULLAN) AND TWO ABSTENTIONS (ROMANO AND MELLOW).**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Payroll Function Consolidation – Update on Status**

Dr. Cook said that Conference Room 231 has been moved into the new space and that the old space is under renovation. Mr. Hamilton said that the work was going on in the old conference room. Ms. V said that the room should be ready in two or three weeks. Mr. Hamilton said that the timing was good because the BOE now has the opening of school behind them and it should work out well.

Mr. Iannaccone asked about the space upstairs. Dr. Cook said that there had been some discussion about creating a position for Benefits Manager to work on both the City and the BOE staff. The space would be an ideal location. Mr. Hamilton pointed out that Benefits was the second largest portion of the City budget and neither the City Administration or the Board of Education has a staff member who is dedicated to this area. He said that it would be helpful to have solid policies in place and have someone in place to be sure the rules are adhered to. Mr. Wilms said that most of the recent tax increase was simply to pay for benefits.

**Legal Services – Discussion with Corporation Counsel Robert Maslan concerning potential areas of consolidation**

Atty. Maslan said that he had been in contact with Ms. Ruotolo about some of the various legal issues that the City could handle for the BOE. Atty. Maslan said that he would be reviewing the bills in the BOE “General” Legal folder to determine what the City could handle for the BOE. It will take a time to quantify how much savings would be realized, but if there is more manpower, it will be paid for by the savings.

Mr. Wilms asked what kind of timeline and what kind of savings could be realized. Dr. Cook said that when the previous superintendent’s contract was done, he estimated that the City could have saved approximately \$30,000. Corporation Counsel could handle other issues such as non-educational civil rights cases, or contract negotiations. Dr. Cook gave an example a potential contract between the BOE and Whitson’s regarding a rental, Atty. Maslan was able to give an opinion, and tell Dr. Cook what steps need to be taken to move the issue forward. Sending that out to Sullivan and Shone would have cost much more.

Mr. Hamilton asked who had the authority to contact Atty. Maslan about legal issues. Dr. Cook said that it would be Dr. Marks; Assistant Superintendent Daddona, Dr. Cook, Board Chairman Iannaccone, the Negotiation Committee, and Ms. Ruotolo.

Atty. Maslan said that regarding general corporate legal issues, it would be important to clearly delineate between the educational components and the other general issues. Ms. Ruotolo pointed out that last year there was a full blown termination and a contract issue. Other years, the expenses would not be a high.

Dr. Cook then gave a brief overview of the special education legal services selection committee and the special education legal services RFP was published. Six vendors responded and four have currently been interviewed. On November 8th, there will be a second round of interviews with two agencies.

Atty. Maslan said that all the previously mentioned factors would be contributing to quantifying the savings. Mr. Wilms said that at budget time, he would expect to see the

legal budget decrease. Dr. Cook said that he expected this trend would happen, but it would be over a period of time. Atty. Maslan said that his department is already a half person short, and that if new work continued to come in, his department may require more staff.

Atty. Maslan said that both the BOE and the City administrations have been very progressive and that many of the changes have been implemented by both of the administrations rather than being mandated by the BET/BOE Joint Services Study Group. Mr. Wilms said that he agreed and good progress has been made. Mr. Hamilton said that there were communities where the BOE and the municipal administration will not speak to one another.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* MR. IANNACONE MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services