

**CITY OF NORWALK
BET/BOE STUDY GROUP
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 27, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: Fred Wilms, Chair; Dr. Dan Cook, NPS; Thomas Hamilton, City of Norwalk Director of Finance; Leo Mellow, BET; Rosa Murray, BOE Chair (5:42 p.m.)

OTHERS: Marie Patchen, NPS Payroll; Ossie Lewis, City of Norwalk Finance; Frank Sarno, City IT Department; James Haselkamp, City Personnel Director

APPROVAL OF JULY 2, 2009 MINUTES

**** MR. HAMILTON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JULY 2, 2009 AS SUBMITTED,
** THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE IN FAVOR (COOK, HAMILTON AND WILMS) AND ONE ABSTENTION (MELLOW)**

**UPDATE ON CITY AND BOARD OF EDUCATION PAYROLL &
TIME/ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE**

Mr. Wilms gave a brief overview of the history of how the joint study group came to be and said that the goal of the study group was to prevent duplication of effort and save money as a result for both the City and the Board.

Mr. Hamilton said that there had been a number of things that have indicated that the City's time/collection system needed to be revamped. He explained that he realized that the IT Department needed to be revamped in order to update the time collection system for the City.

Ms. Murray joined the group at 5:42 p.m.

Some money was allocated for revamping the system and an RFP was posted earlier this summer and a review panel has reviewed the top three candidates. He explained that the City hoped to be recommending a vendor for approval in September. Mr. Hamilton said that both the City and the BOE needed to review the various processes and see if there are areas that can be improved and automated. Mr. Hamilton said that it became very evident very quickly that the front end of capturing the information and entering it into the system is done manually. Mr. Hamilton pointed out that Ms. Patchen literally holds the system together. If something happened to Ms. Patchen, no paychecks would be issued to the school employees.

Mr. Sarno said that the City IT Department has been working on creating a system that would allow the information to be entered by the employee and then the information would be passed into MUNIS. Dr. Cook said that it would get rid of paper and would eliminate the school secretary filling out a form and sending it to Payroll to have it entered into the system. Dr. Cook said that there are two pilot programs running, one at Brookside and a second at Brien McMahon to eliminate some of the duplicate entry work. Timesavings will be significant at the school level and Payroll will not have to re-enter the work.

Mr. Hamilton said that for the 09-10 school year, he would like to see the system up and running because the paper process is a very cumbersome process. He said that he would like to recommend that the City and the BOE be on the same system, but this will take time to implement. He said that he would like to see this done by January 1, 2010 for all of the City groups except for Police and Fire.

Mr. Wilms asked what was different about the Police and Fire departments. Mr. Hamilton explained that there were Federal laws that govern the overtime and they also have a different pay cycle. The Fire Department was pursuing a system called TeleStat because there are union rules that govern who is called in when a staff member is out sick.

Mr. Haselkamp said that he believed that the Police Department would need to have a system that would track the employees better. He said that SubFinder also integrates the information. A better system would give the City better control than it currently has right now.

Mr. Hamilton explained that the maintenance of accruals is critical because it impacts the various employees' payments. Currently, the City does have an accurate accrual system that calculates the employees' vacation and sick time. The balances that appear on the non-public safety employees are accurate. Public Safety employees have a different system and a number of different classifications that the accrued time can be assigned to.

Mr. Mellow asked how much time it cost the BOE to handle the manual entry. Mr. Hamilton said that he did not believe anyone had calculated the cost. Mr. Haselkamp said that because the process was decentralized, it was very difficult to calculate. Dr. Cook said that the District had expected to have the system automated this coming fiscal year, so that they had felt comfortable cutting one of the clerks who entered information.

Ms. Murray said that she was concerned with the timeframe because the schools were being asked to do more with less and that there would be training involved. She said that it would be important to talk more about the incoming system. Mr. Hamilton said that the incoming system would result in more time for the staff because it would go quicker.

Ms. Murray said that the training should have started back in the beginning of the summer. She said that there were other things that also had to be implemented in the schools. Ms. Murray said that it would be important to have the staff involvement. Dr. Cook said that the principals of Brookside and Brien McMahon had talked to the other principals and explained to them that once they get past the learning curve, it is much easier and quicker. He added that the pilots were being used to find the errors and the glitches and some have turned up. The principle priority right now is the students that will be arriving on the buses on Wednesday morning, which is why this is being introduced slowly. Ms. Murray noted that the salaries were the largest portion of the BOE budget.

Mr. Wilms said that Ms. Murray had expressed concerns about the accruals and the sick time tracking. Ms. Murray said that she didn't see accruals on the paycheck stubs. Ms. Patchen explained that there was a problem with the computer printing the accruals and some staff was receiving too much time and others who were getting too few. The MUNIS techs came back and made modifications to the programs to correct this and also to adjust the tables for the school aides who now have reduced hours. Currently, the District is up to date on July 1st.

Dr. Cook then explained that when a new staff member comes in, HR could collect the basic data and enter it the first time. It will be important to have all the information HR, Comptrollers, Finance and Payroll all they need on the initial forms. Mr. Haselkamp said that he would like to see the applicants enter the data directly into MUNIS.

Dr. Cook said that he was glad that the City was paving the way with the vendors and the District has to go back to the Committees and Boards to insure that everyone is on the same page. The District will also have to go to the Board for the financial implications. Ms. Murray said that she didn't think that would slow the process down too much. The Board is already aware that the District needs to upgrade to make the system.

Mr. Wilms said that it sounded like there were two major systems, the mailroom and the payroll system, already underway. He asked if the two initiatives already addressed this, or if something had to be added and discussed.

Mr. Hamilton said that one consideration was whether the City should outsource the payroll system. He said that while MUNIS has its flaws, the payroll portion does work. If there were no financial reason to switch, he would not recommend this. Mr. Hamilton asked if there was direct deposit mandate. Mr. Haselkamp said that you can not mandate direct deposit for active staff members, but retired employees can be mandated to have direct deposit.

Mr. Haselkamp said that there were some cities that combined outsourcing and with in house processing. He pointed out that one thing for municipalities is that the maintenance of the various tables when union clauses are changed.

Mr. Hamilton said that it would make some sense to look at outsourcing the services, and it would give the City a benchmark for comparison. If there were an in house payroll solution, he would like to use MUNIS. A brief discussion followed about whether this should be done now or wait until after the next twelve months when the gathering of data has been automated. Mr. Hamilton said that there was more work to do internally before anything can be determined. He suggested that the item be kept on the agenda for further discussion as the information becomes available.

Mr. Wilms suggested that the study group decide on the topic for the next meeting. Mr. Hamilton said that he had several large projects underway. Mr. Wilms said that the next meeting should be just an update on the mailroom and the payroll projects. He said that he would like to keep the momentum going and suggested the next meeting be scheduled for September 24th at 5:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. WILMS MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services