

**CITY OF NORWALK
JOINT SERVICE STUDY GROUP
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION/BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 26, 2010**

ATTENDANCE: Fred Wilms, Chair; Jody Bishop Pullan, BOE; Glenn Iannaccone, BOE; Dr. Susan Marks, Superintendent of Schools

STAFF: Atty. Robert Maslan, Corporation Counsel; George Giannitti, BOE; Donna Vaccarella, BOE Finance, Dr. Dan Cook, BOE; Fay Ruotolo, BOE (5:33 p.m.); Tony Daddona, BOE (5:35 p.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Wilms called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 24, 2010

**** MR. IANNACONE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 24, 2010 AS SUBMITTED.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH THREE IN FAVOR (WILMS, IANNACONE AND MARKS) AND ONE ABSTENTION (BISHOP-PULLAN).**

OLD BUSINESS

Mail Room Operations

Dr. Cook said that the mail room relocation and reorganization was going well. The City Mail Room is now on the third floor and the merger of the services has already resulted in savings of over \$7,000. Some of the savings has to be used for a new mail machine, which will have accounting features that can subdivide and track the departments mailing costs.

Ms. Ruotolo joined the meeting at 5:33 p.m.

There will be additional savings of .05¢ for each piece of mail through the machine. The postage machines in the individual schools and off site locations (Fire Department, Police Department, etc.) will be removed, resulting in a monthly savings of between \$250 and \$300 per site location. It is expected that this will result in savings of approximately \$75,000 in combined savings. Mr. Wilms commented that originally the schedule had been expected to take two years. Dr. Cook said that Mr. Giannitti had been supported by

the Purchasing Department. Dr. Cook said that he has been estimating that the District spends approximately 2/3rd of the total postage budget, but with the new machine, the actual figures will be available.

Mr. Daddona joined the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Board of Education Print Shop

Dr. Cook said that the print shop is now located on the first floor where the old mail room was. It is totally functional and has generated approximately 55,000 copies per day for the opening of school. No jobs have been sent out to local printers. Later, the other City departments will be allowed to use the print shop for large print jobs. It costs approximately one third of a cent per page.

The priorities of the print shop will have to be the schools first and then the City Departments. Another benefit is that there is better supervision at this location, which has resulted in smoother operations. It is estimated that there will be a reduction in costs over the next four years. Books, such as student handbooks, can be done with spiral binding, comb bindings, top stitch binding or vellum bindings.

Payroll Consolidation

Mr. Wilms commented that Room 231 will be converted into the Payroll Annex to accommodate the consolidation of the District Payroll with Comptrollers. The renovations are expected to be completed by October 1. The space occupied by Gilbane will be shifted to Norwalk High School. Their space will be converted into a larger room for general meetings. Dr. Cook said that the focus of the project was to have more support for the District, reduce costs and increase efficiency.

Ms. Bishop-Pullan asked for clarification on the moves. Dr. Cook pointed out that these changes will provide back up support for the District. He added that the merge will result in greater efficiency. Dr. Marks said that she thought there may be advantages in having cross-trained staff which would add to the efficiency.

Mr. Iannaccone asked if the next step would be eliminating as much paper as possible. Dr. Cook said that he felt that Mr. Gilden would aid with moving the District towards this goal.

NEW BUSINESS

Legal Services – Discussion with Corporation Counsel Robert Maslan

Mr. Wilms said that preliminary discussions about Legal Services taking on more of the District's legal work had occurred. Atty. Maslan said that he had reviewed the 2009-2010 legal expenses for the District. There are three categories: Regular Education, Special Education and everything else. He said that he believed that Corporation Counsel could pick up many of the items that fell into the third category.

Atty. Maslan said that his department could not help with the expulsion hearings due to statutory regulations. Routine expulsions and residency hearings must also be done by an independent counselor. The discussion then moved to specific incidents in terms of special accommodations for students.

Atty. Maslan then reviewed the remaining budget categories with the Joint Service Committee members and indicated which ones he felt that his department could assist with.

Atty. Maslan then said that the Special Education category was a very specialized legal field and required a very current knowledge of available services and available providers. He explained that the City would have to hire a few lawyers who were up to speed on this. Mr. Daddona agreed with Atty. Maslan in this and said that a mistake in this area could cost a District thousands of dollars in an out of district placement. Dr. Marks agreed and said that having the expertise on a volatile case would be important. Ms. Bishop-Pullan pointed out that now that the Board is a member of CAFE, some of the issues could be clarified by them. Atty. Maslan said that his department also might be able to assist in answering these questions.

Mr. Wilms then requested that Atty. Maslan prepare a break out of the different areas his Department might be able to assist with. Ms. Bishop-Pullan asked if Mr. Haselkamp could be present to discuss the aspect of labor negotiation. Atty. Maslan pointed out that prior to the City hiring some of the current staff, the resources for these issues simply were not available. Mr. Wilms said that he felt that this item could be something for the next agenda.

Atty. Maslan commented that the preparation of an RFP for legal services had been a good start. Dr. Cook said that he had not found any record of one in the files. Mr. Iannaccone said that he had raised the question at a Board meeting two years ago and had been told that it had never been done.

Take any action, as necessary, on any above agenda item.

There was no action necessary on any agenda item.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. IANNACONE MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services