CITY OF NORWALK
JOINT SERVICES STUDY GROUP
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION/BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING
JUNE 24, 2010

ATTENDANCE: Fred Wilms, Chair, Glenn Iannaccone, BOE Chair; Joanne Romano, Common Council; Dr. Dan Cook, NPS Interim Finance Director; George Giannitti, NPS Purchasing; Leo Mellow, BET

STAFF: Thomas Hamilton, Director of Finance; Fred Gilden, Comptroller

OTHERS: Atty. Robert Maslan, Gerald Foley, Purchasing; Donna Vaccarella, NPS Finance

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 25 MINUTES

**** MR. IANNACCONE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 25, 2010.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED WITH FIVE IN FAVOR (WILMS, IANNACCONE, COOK, GIANNITTI AND MELLOW) AND ONE ABSTENTION (ROMANO).**

OLD BUSINESS UPDATE

a. Mail Operations

Dr. Cook said that there was some blending of topics because some projects have impact on other projects. Mr. Giannitti then displayed a street map of Norwalk and explained that once they are finished analyzing the information, they will do a route check. The Mail room has been looked at and the idea of bringing the mail operations up to the third floor, which would eliminate one mail machine, has been discussed. Mr. Giannitti said that the copy center and the mail room are currently jammed into one room. This move has been discussed with the staff and the union representatives. By using the corporate mailing, there will be savings, along with the $350 for the eliminated postage meter.

b. Printing –

Regarding the printing, when the mail room moves upstairs, the space will be reconfigured and the larger printer will be moved in from the High School.

The transition from Xerox to CBS (Connecticut Business Systems) has been implemented at the schools. There are already serious savings. When the computers are hooked up to the copiers rather than desk top printers, it will reduce the copy costs from .5¢ to .003¢. There is a buy out clause in the new contract and CBS will be giving a the City a check for an escrow account. There has been a great deal of coordination between Purchasing, the Corporation Counsel and Dr. Cook on this.

c. Recycling –

Dr. Cook said that there are 13 of the schools had the recycling programs underway. A copy of a program chart was distributed to those present. The solid lines indicate the schools that would have the program next year at the beginning of the school, which will be in school. Mr. Giannitti then gave an overview of the program status. The program covers white paper, brown paper, cafeteria trays, bottles, cans, and other items. The Central Office has blue bins and the bottles are being saved for Norwalk High School. At NHS, the dumpster is now down from an 80 yard to a 40 yard. Pick up is being done at every school.

d. Time collection –

The City has moved forward with its new time collection. Mr. Gilden said that DPW and Park were brought online. Sworn police and fire are not online at this time. While the system is big enough to handle the BOE, but the licenses have not yet been purchased for this. Mr. Hamilton then gave a brief overview of the program. The BOE is using the interim system that the city created last year.

NEW BUSINESS

Legal services

Mr. Wilms said that at the last meeting, the idea of the BOE and the City working more closely together on this. Atty. Maslan said that in 2008, the City spent 270 hours, which at $25.00 per hour, which is about $60,000. This was also true in 2009.

Atty. Maslan said that the City has been working with the BOE on personal injuries cases. He mentioned that one case involving a student injury had just been settled this past Tuesday night.

Atty. Maslan said that the City has also been helping with the close out of construction contracts. While the most recent contract was labor intensive because of the start up cost of developing a new template.

The issue of worker's comp is still unclear. With other cities, those claims are turned over to CIRMA. When a workers' comp case involves lawsuit, CIRMA used to send the worker's comp case to a third party firm. Now the City will be handling the third party actions rather than an outside legal firm. Mr. Hamilton then gave a brief overview of the CIRMA arrangement. Discussion followed about the RFP that went out earlier in the year in terms of compensation claims.

Atty. Maslan said that his office does not handle general education and special education. These general education topics would cover curriculum issues, expulsion hearings, and residency issues.

Dr. Cook said that regarding Special Education, he believe that the District spent about $240,000 plus, for special ed and about $150,000 for general education. This would also include contract negotiations. The discussion then moved to whether it would be feasible. Atty. Maslan said that he would look into this. He said from his own experience in these two areas, it would be helpful to have information from other Districts. Atty. Maslan then gave an overview of the expulsion process in Norwalk, Fairfield, Trumbull and Stamford. He said that Norwalk seems to be doing it quite efficiently because it handles it in house. Ms. Vaccarella and Dr. Cook both said that they believed there were about 150 expulsions in the past year.

Atty. Maslan said that the residency hearings were structured differently. Typically, there is no lawyer involved, unless the student brings his attorney. Ms. Vaccarella said that if there were four cases a year that would be a lot. However, both the BET and the NFT agrees that out of district students cost the District.

In terms Special Education, most of the times, the District can handle it without legal counsel, but when the PPT moves up into an appeal process, then an attorney is needed.

Mr. Wilms said that it would make sense to investigate the cost of general education and special education legal services and analyzing whether it would be cost effective to have a staff member in Corporation Counsel's office. The discussion then moved to issues involved with contracts and benefits administration. Mr. Hamilton then spoke about a new program that the Federal Administration was working on that had to do with Early Retirements.

Mr. Wilms pointed out that although the City had just passed a basically flat budget, the two items that would increase were pension and benefits.

Mr. Wilms said that there seemed to be a consensus that Atty. Maslan should move forward with investigating the issues discussed.

Payroll

Mr. Hamilton said that payroll has been discussed in the past and after discussion with staff, the general consensus was that the Board should use the same system as the City. In order to do this, he explained that the two District payroll employees, the payroll supervisor and one position in the NFT, would remain as BOE employees. Ultimately, it would be best to have those two employees located in the Comptroller's Office. This would insure that there was a contingency plan in the event of something going wrong. There will be some issues remaining that will have to be worked out, such as performance evaluations.

Mr. Iannaccone asked if Dr. Marks had been informed about this. Dr. Cook said that he had spoke with Mr. Nast about this and he would speak with Dr. Marks next week when she arrives.

Mr. Gilden said that there were a number of things that were done manually in the BOE that could be computerized. Mr. Hamilton pointed out that Mr. Gilden has been producing the payroll checks and processing the W-2 forms for the BOE for many years. Mr. Iannaccone asked about how the time and attendance was done for the teachers. Mr. Gilden gave an overview. Mr. Hamilton said that Mr. Gilden was the unsung hero of the City. He added that when the auditors come in, they often don't have do any auditing adjustments, which is virtually unheard of for an municipality.

**** MS. ROMANO MOVED TO ENDORSE THE PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION OF THE BOE PAYROLL FUNCTION WITH THAT OF THE CITY OF NORWALK AND THE PHYSICALLY RELOCATION OF THE BOE PAYROLL SUPERVISOR AND A SECOND POSITION TO THE COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE WHILE RETAINING THEIR STATUS AS BOE EMPLOYEES.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Purchasing

Mr. Hamilton said that Mr. Foley was present and that many of his project over the past few months were associated with the BOE. Dr. Cook said that he was converting Mr. Giannitti into more of an operations person and that this was possible because Mr. Foley was lending his expertise to the NPS Purchasing Department. With Mr. Foley's support, Mr. Giannitti and Dr. Cook were able to steer the lunch program out of the $170,000 debt

of two year ago and in the black. Mr. Foley has also been able to help with the transportation bid and the copier bids.

Mr. Wilms said that it was great to hear. Atty. Maslan said that until the copier contract issue came up, the BOE had never approached the City for assistance in this area. Mr. Wilms said that there were more and more instances of increased efficiency

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services