

Thursday, September 12, 2019

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held September
12, 2019, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace,
Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:42 p.m. Present were
Chair John Weldon, Secretary Joseph Sokolovic, Hernan
Illingworth, Maria Pereira, and Chris Taylor. LaMar Kennedy
arrived subsequently as noted.

Acting Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present.

The first agenda item was discussion and possible action
regarding MOUs with the BEA concerning high school
athletic directors.

Mr. Testani said the agreement was the same as last year.
He said it was made clear that the expectation was that the
help given last year on paperwork items would not be
provided and they are expected to take on those tasks.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said the district
athletic director position was a Group 2 administrator, with a
range of salary up to \$142,000, plus benefits.

Mr. Illingworth said last year \$15,000 was paid per position.
Mr. Testani said the payments covered three positions for
this year.

In response, Mr. Testani said he was okay with the provision
about going forward in the BEA contract negotiations.

Ms. Pereira said she wanted to make sure the district was not locked into paying the athletic directors over a three-year contract if a district athletic director is brought back.

Board members suggested an ending date be added to the MOU.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said Atty. Dugas reviewed the MOU.

Mr. Taylor said he didn't believe the board should micromanage the process and do legal work.

Mr. Kennedy arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Testani said number 3 could be stricken and the MOU sent back to the BEA. Mr. Weldon suggested putting a parameter of one year on the MOU. Ms. Pereira suggested the word "may" be used instead of "shall."

Mr. Testani said all MOUs were only effective for the current bargaining agreement and don't roll into the next agreement.

Ms. Pereira move *"to approve the memorandum of understanding for high school athletic directors on the condition that bullet number 3 on page 1 is stricken."* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic.

The motion was approved by a 5-1 vote. Voting in favor were members Sokolovic, Weldon, Pereira, Illingworth and Kennedy. Mr. Taylor was opposed.

The next agenda item was discussion and possible action regarding facility use agreement with Beachside Soccer.

Mr. Testani said the agreement came out of the Facilities Committee and was reviewed by attorneys. He said it was a one-year agreement with notification regarding extension or termination at the end of January.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said the agreement may result in \$50,000 to \$60,000 in rental payments for the year. He said he wanted to see the money put back into district athletics and not to supplant any current athletic expenditures.

Mr. Illingworth noted the resolution out of the Facilities Committee called for Beachside to negotiate with the superintendent. He said he was in favor of the agreement. He said it still needed to be decided whether the money should go to Harding athletics or the district athletics as a whole.

Mr. Testani recommended 25 percent of the money go toward maintenance of the field right off the top and the rest of the money be split between the high schools.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said there is a provision in the contract that if someone comes in and offers a higher rate, Beachside gets right of first refusal to match the price. He said he had heard from Trinity Catholic and the University of Bridgeport Beachside were great tenants. He said if they need to use the field house they will pay custodial fees.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said he did not believe there would be any games played at Harding, although the contract had a reference to games. He said they would not have access to the school building, but the

custodians would clean the field house at the end of every day as they do currently because it contains a locker room.

Ms. Pereira said she believed security would be required for games. Mr. Kennedy said he has seen their games at the University of Bridgeport with less than a hundred people present.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said Atty. Dugas reviewed the contract.

Ms. Pereira said a sexual molestation provision should be added to the contract.

Mr. Taylor said even though Atty. Dugas was paid to review the contract. Ms. Pereira was picking up flaws in the contract. He said he would be voting no. He said we are getting rotten service from Atty. Dugas.

Ms. Pereira moved *“to the approve the license agreement with Beachside of Connecticut SC, Incorporated, d/b/a Beachside Soccer, with the following changes: under bullet seven, liability insurance, that they must provide insurance in the amount of \$5 million, that the Bridgeport Board of Education should be named as additionally insured, and that they also obtain molestation insurance; and that in paragraph B, page 2, that the named licensure, not as Warren Harding High school – that is to be deleted – and replaced with Bridgeport Board of Education; and that, on the final page, instead of saying signed by Mike Testani, Superintendent, it’s signed by Mike Testani, Acting Superintendent.”*

The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic.

The motion was approved by a 5-1 vote. Voting in favor were members Sokolovic, Weldon, Pereira, Illingworth and Kennedy. Mr. Taylor was opposed.

Ms. Pereira moved that *“all net income from this agreement – first, they pay all the costs associated with utilities and maintenance related with the use of the Warren Harding High School field; any remaining be divided be divided equally between Harding, Bassick and Central.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on special education transportation.

Ms. Pereira noted the board had received no information on the item.

Mr. Testani said the board's transportation policy prohibits transportation to babysitters or relatives. He said when Mr. Oddo, the executive director of specialized instruction, sent out transportation notices for this school year it was discovered that for years there have been pickups and drop-offs at locations where students did not live.

Mr. Testani said he was not requesting a policy change, but there are some hardship cases where families leave for work early in the morning. He said Mr. Oddo indicated he received about 40 to 50 calls about this, of which about 25 parents have been persistent on the subject.

Mr. Testani said pickoff and drop-off should be from the same location. He said in most cases he did not think it would add costs to the budget. He said there should be an application process for parents. He suggested the board attorney draft a liability waiver for the parent to sign.

Mr. Weldon said the parents should not be allowed to change the requested location more than once.

Mr. Illingworth said he was in favor of looking at the whole policy in this area. He said he understood the concerns of parents, but there had to be some parameters in place.

Ms. Pereira said she would like to know how we had 40 to 50 people who have been violating board policy. She added there was a parent who came before the board last year who was granted an exception, but it was an involved process.

Mr. Testani said he would like to share information in the future with the board about related subjects.

Mr. Weldon suggested it be crystal-clear that the arrangement is subject to change based on however the board modifies the policy.

Ms. Pereira moved *“to suspend the rules regarding Policy 3541.5, Article 5, that the acting superintendent has the authority make exceptions to the pickup/drop-off policy for students on the condition that it’s a special needs child; that there’s no additional cost to change the route; and, third, that the parent or parents must sign a waiver indemnifying the board from anything that may or may not happen because they’ve requested the child to be picked up and dropped off from a location other than their residence; and, fourth, that every parent who receives that special exemption understands that this is temporary and that the board’s going to be reviewing sometime and it may or may not move forward.”*

Mr. Testani said the district would create a waiver.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon.

Mr. Taylor said he would like to congratulate the person who has been accommodating the parents with special needs children. He said single parents should receive the same treatment as long as there is no additional cost.

Mr. Testani said the proposed change applies only to students who receive door-to-door transportation.

Mr. Taylor said he wanted to see the policy change implemented immediately.

Mr. Testani said everything could be in place for Monday morning. He said the parents would be contacted via telephone.

Mr. Kennedy noted the addresses of the students should be available in their IEPs. He said there might have to be a PPT for each student whose transportation is changed. He said once word starts getting around there may be many more such requests.

Ms. Pereira urged the special education director be consulted regarding the appropriateness of new PPTs.

Mr. Testani said the only holdup has been the board policy.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Taylor moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

Approved by the board on September 23, 2019