

Thursday, October 22, 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONTRACTS COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held October 22, 2020, by video conference, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon, Joseph Sokolovic, and Joseph Lombard.

Supt. Michael J. Testani was present.

Mr. Sokolovic moved to approve the committee's minutes of August 12, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Lombard and approved by a 2-0 vote. Mr. Sokolovic and Mr. Weldon voted in favor. Mr. Lombard abstained.

The next agenda item was on a memorandum of understanding(MOU) between the board and the Bridgeport Housing Authority for the usage of Trumbull Gardens computer room as a satellite adult education location.

Supt. Testani said over the years there have been satellite locations for adult education programs. He said the housing authority approached him last fall about utilizing the computer lab. He said he was willing to provide the instructor and the materials as long as they were able to get enough people to participate in the programming. He said the district was unable to pay a monthly rental fee.

Given enough enrollment in the programming, Mr. Denton has found instructors to provide instruction through the adult

education budget. He said it's always nice to bring programming out to the community.

The superintendent said the MOU was vetted by Atty. Floyd Dugas.

Mr. Lombard moved "*to refer this to the full board for its consideration and possible approval.*" The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on Addendum 1 to the contract with We Transport.

Marlene Siegel, chief financial officer, said the addendum is intended to allow We Transport assume responsibility for both routing and management services. The assumption of management will occur on February 1, 2021 and the routing services as of July 1, 2021. She said the timetable was designed to allow We Transport to hire a dedicated transportation manager.

Ms. Siegel said the cost for the services on a full year basis will be \$101,400 for 2021-22, which includes the 1.4 percent inflation factor in the current contract.

Ms. Siegel said the intent is to achieve a higher level of operational effectiveness and efficiency in the context of an organizational change in the district office. Currently there is a director of transportation and two transportation specialist positions, one of which is vacant. There was a student support data analyst position that was vacated through retirement.

Ms. Siegel said under the new structure transportation would be under the supervision of the manager of business

operations, a position in the finance officer currently held by Tony Pires. She said one transportation specialist position would be retained.

Ms. Siegel said the director of counseling and parent partnership was created as part of the savings. She said the total savings are about \$100,000, but more importantly it will yield higher operational effectiveness and efficiency.

Ms. Siegel said We Transport already does all of the special education routing and will now assume general education routing. The district would continue to pay the annual fee for Transfinder and manage the interface between Transfinder and Power School.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said We Transport will utilize Transfinder so the software will be compatible; Transfinder data will be patched into Power School.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said We Transport will present a new schematic plan for 2021-22, which the district has to approve before they are finalized. We Transport has to provide a comparative year-to-year analysis with an explanation for any increase or decrease of routes. Approval for additional routes require the approval of the CFO or the superintendent.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *“to refer this to the full board for their consideration and possible approval.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Lombard and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on an RFP for specialized substitute staff services for March 2021 through 2024.

Ms. Siegel said the current contract with Delta T, the current vendor, will expire on March 17, 2021. Under the city charter, contracts have a maximum term of three years.

Ms. Siegel said the RFP is for specialized substitute staff services, which is distinct from the vendor for substitute teachers and the absence management system, which is handled by Kelly Services.

Ms. Siegel said this refers to special education paraprofessionals, special education teachers if Kelly is unable to identify such teachers, therapeutic services, pre-K paraprofessionals, and bilingual program paraprofessionals in cases of extended or long-term absence. She said we do not cover occasional absences of paras except for pre-K classes.

Ms. Siegel said if special ed or bilingual paras are absent for an extended period of time, then we attempt to provide coverage.

Ms. Siegel said Delta T is the current vendor and they make every effort to fulfill our requests, with the current year being a great challenge with a staffing shortage during a pandemic. She said the RFP is intended to seek proposals from multiple vendors with the idea of entering into contractual agreements with multiple firms. There could be two or more nonexclusive agreements.

Ms. Siegel said another RFP will be presented for the absence management system and substitute teachers because the Kelly contract will expire on June 30, 2021. That RFP will include the vendor managing the substitute service for pre-K paras who are absent.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said the best terms with each vendor would be negotiated despite there being nonexclusive contracts. She said it is possible some vendors may only be able to provide staff in certain categories.

Mr. Sokolovic said March was a clunky expiration date because it was in the middle of the year. Ms. Siegel said she has considered asking the purchasing office to approve a slightly longer term in order to bring the end date to June 30, 2024. Mr. Sokolovic said an alternative would be a shorter contract with an extension provision.

Mr. Weldon said he believed purchasing would likely approve some accommodation. He noted one-year options were possible and good to have in your back pocket.

Mr. Lombard moved "*to refer this to the full board for its consideration and approval.*" The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on exercising option year one of the legal services contract with Berchem Moses.

Supt. Testani said Berchem Moses committed to holding firm on the current billing rates if the contract was extended. He said we have exceptional service by Berchem Moses and they are currently working on some things that we would not to be disrupted.

The superintendent recommended the one-year extension, with the approval of the city attorney, rather than going out to bid on legal services.

Mr. Sokolovic noted there were trainings offered in the contract, and suggested we avail ourselves of these

complimentary services. Supt. Testani said some trainings have been utilized and he was planning on approaching them for more.

Mr. Sokolovic moved “*to refer to this full board for consideration and approval.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Lombard and unanimously approved.

Mr. Weldon said the city attorney has been reached out to see there was objection to an extension, and they have responded as of yet.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod