

Thursday, February 25, 2021

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CONTRACTS COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held February 25, 2021, 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.

Mr. Lombard moved to approve the committee's minutes of December 3, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on an RFP for noncertified staff services.

Marlene Siegel, chief financial officer, said the city purchasing office informed the district that it was necessary to have a contract in place for noncertified, temporary staff. She said the staff cover absences of noncertified employees in schools or the district office, including clericals and technology support staff. She said Merritt Staffing, the current provider, is being used through the end of the fiscal year.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said when she came into the district nine years ago she was informed Merritt could be used because it was used by the city and she believed it was the city-contracted agency.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said that going forward there would be contracts for (1) noncertified, temporary staff; (2) the specialized substitute staff, primarily in the special education realm; and (3) absence management for all staff and substitute staffing primarily for teachers. She said the last category will also include coverage for pre-K paras in general education classes.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said all known needs will be covered after this process is concluded.

Tim McNamara of the HR department said the proposed RFP was pretty standard.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said every contract going forward is including a provision allowing the board to extend the contract with mutual agreement by one or two years. She said she understood the city charter specifies three year terms to contracts, but exceptions have been made.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *“to refer this item to the full board for its consideration and approval with a recommendation that they approve.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Lombard and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on a contract with Delta-T Group of Hartford, Inc., for specialized staff placement.

Ms. Siegel said a board-approved RFP was issued for specialized substitute services. Delta-T was the only bidder. She said in consultation with the superintendent, negotiations began for renewal of the current contract with Delta-T, which is expiring on May 17, 2021.

Ms. Siegel said the contract developed covers May 18, 2021 to June 30, 2024. She said the proposed contract was reviewed by the city attorney's office and is acceptable to Delta-T.

Ms. Siegel described the rate schedule, which covers portions of three fiscal years. She said rates for paraprofessionals, the primary service provided in the contract, were held fixed to the current rate. There is an increase by one dollar an hour in Year 3.

Ms. Siegel said in some of the other job positions such as occupational therapist and nurse it was necessary to increase the rates because of the shortage as described by Delta-T of available staff. She said the rates for occupational therapist were increased, but the new rate is held firm for Year 2 and then rise again in Year 3. LPN nurses' rates are increased, but held firm in Years 2 and 3.

Ms. Siegel said the contract is non-exclusive and the district could seek other services.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said the RFP was on BidSync for multiple vendors to view. She said the special education department was asked to notify any agencies that were interested.

Mr. Weldon suggested investigating how many companies downloaded the RFP from BidSync to understand if it would be worthwhile to reissue the RFP.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said the positions where the compensation is decided on a case-by-case basis in the contract are severe shortage areas and the persons

are independent contractors who have choice in positions they will accept.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said she would like to move ahead with the agreement, but there is no downside to go out to bid for other providers. Mr. Weldon suggested putting it out only one more time if Ms. Siegel demands it necessary. Ms. Siegel said there may be some companies that don't want to commit to set rates over three years. Mr. Weldon said these kinds of things could be understood from conversations from vendors who downloaded the RFP but did not bid.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *“to approve moving this to the full board with a recommendation to enter into a contract with Delta-T as described by Ms. Siegel.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Lombard and unanimously approved.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod