

Thursday, September 19, 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held September 19, 2019, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. Present were members Chair Joseph Sokolovic and Hernan Illingworth. Board member Maria Pereira was present.

Acting Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present.

Mr. Illingworth moved to approve the minutes of the June 14, 2019, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic. A correction was noted. The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Illingworth moved to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2019, meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was an update on the nutrition department's software purchases. Mr. Sokolovic said the cost is \$28,000 per year.

Mr. Illingworth said he believed the Finance Committee should look at this item and the subsequent item on department vehicles. Ms. Pereira said she was concerned because that committee doesn't meet often.

Mr. Testani said he could not speak to the vehicle purchase in the absence of John Gerrity, the nutrition director.

Mr. Testani said he was not aware of how the item on van purchases got on the agenda. Ms. Pereira said they were very old vehicles, but she objected to the specific vehicle types being requested because it limited the number of possible bidders.

The board members suggested more general references to vehicles. Mr. Testani said he would ask Mr. Gerrity to work with Ms. Siegel and Mr. Pires.

The next agenda item on was on Policy 3320.1R and Policy 3560(b).

Ms. Pereira suggested changing the reference to \$25,000 to \$24,999.

Mr. Illingworth moved *“to move with edits to the full board 3320.1R.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Mr. Testani said there were issues when the district has to solicit three quotes for relatively minor expenses, and then there are delays at the city level.

Mr. Illingworth moved *“to push 3560(b) to the full board as presented.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next item was on transportation, Policy 3541.1 to 3541.5.

Mr. Illingworth said staff input was needed for this item.

Ms. Pereira said the policy did not call for one school to get door-to-door transportation. She said this was a big issue for Fairchild Wheeler.

Mr. Illingworth said he thought the issue had to do with special education transportation.

Mr. Sokolovic said 34.1.5(b) referred to transportation being prohibited to the location of babysitters and relatives.

Mr. Illingworth said he had concerns because parents change babysitters very often and the possible liability issues for the district.

Mr. Testani said he met with the Center for Child Advocacy on a different issue and when this came up everyone was pretty stumped on how to handle it. Ms. Pereira said she did not believe special education students would change babysitters very often. She said last year there was a parent who had to sign a waiver in order for her child to be dropped off at a daycare provider's location.

Ms. Pereira said in the past Mr. Laffitte indicated he was very firm about not granting exceptions to the policy.

Mr. Testani said the waiver created for parents indicated if the requested drop-off location would increase costs it would not be granted. He said one parent refused to sign the waiver and it was not granted to her.

Mr. Sokolovic said he would like Mr. Laffitte to be present at a future discussion. He said the exact parameters of the district's liability should also be clarified. Ms. Pereira said she would like to see the waiver.

Mr. Sokolovic said he would support a once-a-year ask for an accommodation for parents, including one-parent families.

Ms. Pereira said she had not heard a big outcry from parents for such busing accommodations for general education students and said the board should not open a can of worms.

Mr. Illingworth said the biggest issue was for special education students. Ms. Pereira said she would only support it for special education students.

Mr. Sokolovic said the special education students could be added to the policy, along with a reference to a waiver. Ms. Pereira said it should only apply to students who receive door-to-door service whose parents sign a waiver. She said the exception should only be granted if there are no additional costs to the district.

The members said Mr. Laffitte should be involved in future discussion.

Mr. Testani reported Mr. Laffitte indicated he had no memory of a waiver in the past.

Mr. Illingworth said staff members at least of an assistant superintendent level should be present at the committee meetings.

Mr. Testani said he was trying to get the new administrators acclimated to their new roles and where they will best fit.

Mr. Sokolovic moved that the meeting be adjourned. The notion was seconded by Mr. Illingworth and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

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