

Monday, May 7, 2018

MINUTES OF THE FACILITIES COMMITTEE OF THE
BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held May 7, 2018, at
Black Rock School, 545 Brewster Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m.

Committee members present were Chair Chris Taylor and Hernan Illingworth. Board member Joseph Sokolovic was present. Committee member John Weldon arrived subsequently as noted.

Mr. Illingworth moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of March 5, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor and unanimously approved.

The next item on the agenda was a tour of Black Rock School. Mr. Taylor said he was here to get the school fixed. Principal Stephen Cassidy said he understood the steps would be worked on this summer. Alan Wallack said that was the case.

Robert Hammond said after a complaint was raised someone came back to look at the building and removed some pieces that were hanging off the building. Mr. Wallack said \$20,000 was available for the fixes.

Mr. Cassidy said there was an issue with a light in a stairwell. Mr. Hammond said that would be taken care of.

Mr. Taylor said he understood Mr. Cassidy was requesting some beautification done in a vacant lot across the street such as a bench. Mr. Cassidy said the lot across the street was the subject of controversy with eminent domain.

Mr. Wallack suggested Mr. Cassidy call the Parks Department. He said if that did not work, he could provide benches.

Mr. Taylor said it seemed like a small request financially.

In response to question, Mr. Wallack said July 1st would be a good follow-up date for revisiting the issue at the committee.

The next item was on revising Policy 7550 regarding naming of facilities.

Supt. Aresta L. Johnson, Ed.D., arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Sokolovic said he wanted to see if the board could maximize revenue from our assets considering the budget situation. He said if there was a new naming policy in place the board could selling the naming rights for facilities. He said high schools across the country are starting to pick up on this issue.

Mr. Sokolovic distributed copies of the proposed policies. The policy pertains to all physical property and other assets under the jurisdiction of the board. He said the board as a committee of the whole would retain sole discretion for naming of all property under the jurisdiction of the board.

Mr. Sokolovic said the proposal indicates the naming of the facilities will attempt to strike an appropriate balance between the financial interests and the board's core values. The granting of naming rights will be bound an agreement and will be in accordance with any applicable board policy or governing statutes.

Mr. Sokolovic said the naming rights will be granted in return for a tangible contribution, financial or of goods or services. The naming rights in recognition may be granted for persons dead or alive who have attained prominence locally or nationally. He said when granting naming rights every effort should be made to secure the permission of the person or a legal representative of the individual for which the property is to be named.

Mr. Sokolovic said proposal allows the district to seek to monetize naming rights and recognitions. He said the suggested procedures will include naming facilities in whole or in part. The proposals should be directed to the chair of the board, who will then submit the proposal to the appropriate committee for consideration. The board will also seek community input for naming rights and recognition in a

form to be determined by the entire board. All names must be approved by the full board at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Mr. Sokolovic described the process to be used for new projects in excess of \$100,000. He suggested naming rights may be renewed by agreement by both the board and the other party. Any physical display of the named party must be approved by the board and financial responsibility for its maintenance will be borne by the party granted the naming right.

Mr. Sokolovic said any contract granted should include a provision granting the board the right to terminate the agreement in the unlikely event that keeping such a name becomes tarnished.

Mr. Sokolovic noted examples of naming could include a music room or the new cooking facility coming to Harding.

Mr. Taylor said it was a brilliant idea in hard financial times. Mr. Illingworth said he didn't have an issue with it. He suggested there be a legal review of the proposal by the city attorney's office to avoid a legal expenditure by the board.

Mr. Sokolovic said it was being done in Connecticut, but not in the Fairfield County area. He said the board could handle each request itself or sell the naming rights to a company that specializes in selling naming rights.

Mr. Illingworth suggested the matter be tabled and the city attorney's opinion be solicited.

Mr. Illingworth moved *"to have the chair ask the administration to contact the city attorney's office and give us an opinion on this."* Mr. Taylor said there were other pressing issues before the board. He said he would like to revisit it in June.

Mr. Illingworth moved to table the item. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor and unanimously approved.

The next item on the agenda a request from Columbus School for permission to install a memorial bench for guidance counselor Jordan

Soares.

Mary Beth Williamson, assistant principal, was present with two School Governance Council members, Ms. McCarthy and Mr. Meyers.

Ms. Williamson said they had secured funding to put a bench in front of the school in honor of Mr. Soares, who passed away. She said they were looking for permission to have it mounted correctly through the facilities department.

Ms. Williamson said Mr. Soares was very close and special to the students and staff. She said it was a maintenance-free bench that would be inscribed in tribute to Mr. Soares. She said there are gardens in the area of the bench.

The meeting was recessed at 5:55 p.m. and reconvened at 5:59 p.m.

In response to a question, Mr. Wallack said the work could be accomplished. Ms. Williamson said the bench would be ordered and hopefully it would arrive for June, and if not, then there would be a ceremony in September.

There was not a motion to proceed.

The next item was on Connecticut Avenue lease agreement. Mr. Taylor said as a real estate person who has a Connecticut sales license that paying \$21,000 a month for the building that appears to be half occupied by the police department that charges us overtime, given the hard financial crisis we're in, he would like to see the board get out of that lease and have John Ricci provide us with another spot. He said it was an exorbitant amount of money to pay for a decrepit old building. He said he could have bought the building in 2007 for \$300,000.

Dr. Johnson said the board was not receiving any rent back from the police department for their use of the building. Mr. Taylor said maybe we should determine the square footage of the parking lot and what they occupy and back charge them a pro rata share of the rent.

Mr. Illingworth said he was not sure of the market value of the rent. He said it seems like a lot of money but he was not sure if it was unfair or fair. He said he had been to the building many times. He said it was superior to the facilities the board had in the past. In the past the board was in multiple locations, but trucks can now be kept inside and there is storage space for supplies in one safe building.

Mr. Illingworth said he knows the police uses the basement at the building. Mr. Hammond said they park eight to ten cars in the parking lot. Mr. Taylor said he counted 23 the other day.

Mr. Taylor said his problem is we're paying a premium price for the building. He said he didn't know what the motive for the lease was, whether it was political patronage or plain incompetency.

In response to a question, Mr. Taylor said the market rates for the area are two to three dollars a square foot, triple net. Mr. Wallack said the building is about 44,000 square feet and the board is paying about \$5.62 a square foot.

In response to a question, Mr. Wallack said the current lease runs through 2020.

Mr. Wallack said his department did not negotiate the lease. He added that the building is a great building and serves the purposes needed. He said he understands it's a lot of money.

Mr. Illingworth said "the only motion he would be comfortable with would be having a conversation with the landlord and see if he would consider renegotiating more favorable terms and maybe go back to the city and ask them in the situation that we're in if they can help us with some of that rent if the landlord doesn't want to renegotiate."

Mr. Taylor said he would like "to amend the motion to see if there was any revenue what the police actually occupy, the square footage, and I would like to be there when that measurement is taken so maybe this committee could go and personally verify what the police department is using and what the parking lot space is worth, and see if any revenue has come in and then deal with that accordingly. "

Mr. Illingworth made "*that motion*." The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor and unanimously approved.

The next item was on the T-Mobile contract. Dr. Johnson said there was conversation with the city attorney regarding the contract. She said we weren't happy with the initial contract, so at the board meeting it was decided to get the assistance of Shipman & Goodwin.

Dr. Johnson said she had been working with Matt Ranelli of Shipman & Goodwin and made some recommendations for the contract. She said at this point Atty. Ranelli can come before the board and take it through the contract. She said the original contract completely benefitted T-Mobile, not the board or the students of Hallen School. The changes are much more favorable to the district.

Mr. Taylor said his issue was always with the amount to be paid. He said it is prime real estate that the FCC allows transmission from. He said the contract commands a premium.

Dr. Johnson said a cost to just hold the site for T-Mobile has been embedded in the contract proposed. She noted the board may not have the most recent version of the contract. She discussed additions that include a price increase, language about insurance and a roof repair, if needed.

In response to a question, Dr. Johnson said the district had not reached out to any other carriers. She said the matter would have to be placed on the City Council agenda as well. She added there are a lot of moving parts.

Mr. Taylor said Dr. Johnson did an excellent job. Mr. Taylor said the starting price should be about \$250,000 for that location. He said competitors would buy the spot just so T-Mobile cannot put anything on the roof. He said the T-Mobile offer is absolutely insulting. He said it could be put out to bid and go to the highest offer.

Mr. Wallack noted these are not towers, but three six-foot antennas.

Mr. Taylor said he was not qualified to discuss the effects of radio transmissions around young brains. He said he did not have any

factual information on that. He asked the health effects be investigated.

Dr. Johnson recommended the board hear the whole story from Shipman & Goodwin. She said if the board hears the whole story it can make a recommendation on next steps.

Mr. Taylor said he was not impressed with Atty. Ranelli so far. He said he charges us an exorbitant amount of money and he has not been proficient in his duties. He questioned incurring the expense of having the attorney appear before the board.

Mr. Illingworth said the matter should go to the full board. He moved that *"we bring this to the board for further consideration on the new contract."* Mr. Taylor described it as a sharing session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor and unanimously approved.

The next item was on high school morning entry.

Mr. Weldon arrived at the meeting.

Asst. Superintendent John Lischner said this item was the result of some public comment over the past couple of months, primarily at Central, Bassick and Harding. He said he visited each school in the fall to observe the morning arrival of students. At Fairchild Wheeler there was some backup because the students come in clusters on buses.

Mr. Lischner said he visited each school again on two occasions. The greatest area of pressure is within five minutes of the late bell. He said he believed students gain entrance to the building between 91 seconds to 120 seconds from getting on line. The security guards indicated the students are not marked late if they're in line when the bell sounds. One school said they give a five-minute grace period.

Mr. Lischner said he felt comfortable to say the long lines are more the exception as opposed to the norm. He said the Harding and Central lines move pretty smoothly.

Mr. Taylor said he was at Harding one morning. He said the security

did look efficient. He said there was a bottleneck such as occurs on I-95.

Mr. Lischner said the doors open at Bassick at 7:00 o'clock and there is a 53-minute window. He said when people go to the airport they anticipate the time to go through the gate. He said a three-minute wait in the security at the rush would be reasonable and noted if students are in line when the bell rings they're not late.

Mr. Weldon said if the bell time was extended to 8:15, some people would just come at 8:14. He said the age of the facility impacts the situation because it was not designed for metal detectors and the like.

Mr. Lischner said Harding had three metal detectors with about a thousand students to get through in an hour. He said there would be a cost to adding another metal detector and an extra security guard.

Mr. Lischner said there will still be students late regardless of what is done. He suggested starting first at the communication end, letting the students know they have a 53-minute window and if they're in line they won't be marked late.

Mr. Sokolovic said in this fiscal year adding a security guard would not be a reality. He said everyone knows this is a problem. He said if the students don't feel consequences now, they're going to feel them later in life when they get a job. He noted he had been docked as a consequence for being late to his job.

Mr. Weldon said if a student is on the property and is in the line they did their part and got there.

Mr. Lischner noted the district had received a security grant. Jeffrey Postolowski, IT director, said the way the grant was written it was to enhance the IP camera system because it was awarded for building fixtures. He suggested investigating restructuring the grant to see if a metal detector could be considered a fixture.

Mr. Taylor said he represents the student and many students have not received parental guidance. He said it is not fair to hold the student to the same standards adults are.

Mr. Illingworth said over the years he had heard concerns expressed about Fairchild Wheeler entry. He said in some cases there has to be discretion. He said he supported the new communications. He said only the principal knows whether a student is arriving late on purpose or not. He noted college professors will kick students out of class who are late.

Mr. Lischner described it as a balance between consequence and empathy and understanding.

Mr. Illingworth said the principal has a greater understanding of the situation as opposed to the board putting a broad policy together.

Mr. Lischner said the Fairchild Wheeler situation with the students arriving by bus instead of walking was aggravated by several guards who were under various forms of leave and there were some backups there, particularly before April 1.

Albert Benejan, PTSO president at Bassick, was recognized. He said sometimes the metal detectors do not work at Bassick. He said more security was needed. He said students in line at 8:10 are marked absent.

Mr. Lischner summarized the approach going forward to be looking at the grant; communication via phone blasts and emails; and allowing some discretion to principals.

Mr. Illingworth said he didn't think the committee had to take any action.

The next item was on the roof at Read School. Mr. Hammond said it was a steam leak from a pipe that has been patched and repaired.

Mr. Taylor said he got a call from a parent and proceeded to the school. He said there were trash barrels collecting the water and ceiling tiles falling in. He said faculty told him the roof is leaking. He said the indoor air quality in there was unacceptable. He said we have an obligation to give our students a safe building with clean air to breathe.

Mr. Taylor said he would like to make an appointment to revisit the school, particularly on a rainy day, to see if the situation has been resolved.

Mr. Illingworth said he was available on a rainy Friday. He said he found it odd because he thought the principal would know if there are leaks going on.

The next item was on the Bassick roof replacement.

Mr. Wallack said the items on the Bassick, JFK, Hooker and Six to Six roofs all have to be approved individually. He said these are all projects that have already been completed.

Mr. Weldon said the committee would be approving the final acceptance. Mr. Wallack said it then has to go to the board so the city can receive reimbursement.

Mr. Wallack said we've spoken to the principals and the facilities staff and the roofs are all tight. They have been installed for a couple of years.

Mr. Taylor said he will not agree to accept the Bassick roof replacement. He said he had been to the auto shop at Bassick and the roof is leaking. He said the contractor shouldn't be paid and should be sued. He said he would not sign off on any of the roofs until he personally goes out and sees the roofs.

Mr. Wallack said the Bassick roof was replaced two summers ago and the state has a cycle when we can apply for final acceptance.

Mr. Wallack said the easiest way to monitor the roofs is by work orders. He said to his knowledge he had not received any work orders about the auto shop. He said he would go there tomorrow and check it.

Mr. Weldon said roofs can be a headache for this reason. He asked if there is a way to have the principal sign off on such projects indicating there are no problems.

Mr. Wallack said we have one roofer for forty buildings. The roofer inspects the work, including while it is under construction.

Mr. Illingworth said the big disconnect is between the school buildings and central office. Mr. Weldon said in this instance it seems that Mr. Wallack has not heard of an issue that someone is saying at the building level is a big problem.

Mr. Taylor said he constantly hears from staff that they are worried about retaliation and work orders not being acted on. He said he's not saying whether that's true or not. He said Bridgeport usually gets the short end of the stick. He said it was time to reevaluate our construction standard or the person overseeing it.

Mr. Taylor said if the committee sees fit to authorize him to visit the schools he will report back. He says it's time for change. He said he was not blaming Mr. Wallack and Mr. Hammond.

Mr. Illingworth said there are warranties with new roofs. Mr. Wallack said the roofs have twenty-year warranties. Mr. Illingworth said it was about calling up the contractor to fix a problem under warranty. He said he was very concerned about the automotive shop.

Mr. Hammond said he would think the automotive shop teacher, Mr. Blume, would communicate with the custodian and principal. Mr. Wallack said when the roof was first put on Mr. Blume called him about an issue, so he was shocked that if this is so bad he wouldn't have called him again or the custodian or the four principals at the school.

Mr. Illingworth said he agreed with Mr. Weldon's suggestion to have a building principal sign off on such projects.

Mr. Wallack said an outside inspector is not used to look at the roofs. He said there has never been a problem with contractors not coming back and fixing leaks.

Mr. Wallack said the money received from the state is reimbursement to the city for the project.

Mr. Taylor said he was not comfortable signing off on it.

Mr. Wallack said we wouldn't have put this item on this agenda if we knew the roof leaked. Mr. Illingworth said he thought there was a communication issue.

Mr. Hammond said he's not in a position to retaliate, nor would he. Mr. Taylor said he was not referring to you guys, but to central office. Mr. Lischner said he would prefer to have it fixed.

Mr. Sokolovic said in bureaucracies people try to keep their heads down because of a perception of retaliation, not necessarily a reality of retaliation. He said that is part of the climate that needs to be changed. He said perhaps the consequences for not reporting an issue could be made more harsh.

Mr. Taylor said he would like to visit the school and do his own independent assessment with the administration and staff and see if they have anything to tell him that they would not tell the average person.

Mr. Illingworth said we have people making three figures who are more than capable of signing off on a roof and saying there are no current leaks or problems. He said he did not object to Mr. Taylor visiting the school. Mr. Taylor said he didn't think that was fair to an administrator who doesn't have a construction background.

Mr. Weldon said the building principal should have been able to say they have not observed any leaks.

Mr. Wallack said when O & G was still on the job they certified the roof.

Mr. Weldon moved the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Mr. Illingworth and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

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