

Friday, February 15, 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE OF GREAT CITY SCHOOLS MALES OF COLOR OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held February 26, 2019, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 5:42 p.m. Present were Chair Joseph Sokolovic, Dr. Melissa Jenkins, Sauda Baraka JoAnn Kennedy and Carey Wilson. Sana Shah arrived subsequently as noted.

Ms. Baraka moved to approve the committee's minutes of January 8, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

Ms. Baraka moved to move Item 4 to follow Item 1. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The agenda item was discussion and possible action on the programming. The committee looked at the programming submitted by the school facilitators.

Dr. Jenkins noted the funds for the males of color programming at Harding had been encumbered by Mr. Ramos.

Dr. Jenkins reported Dr. McPherson at Central used her own funds for some of the programming and has received price quotes for other activities, including a visit to the Apollo

Theater. The funds for the trip to New York have been encumbered.

There was a discussion of the expense of chart paper and the need for it in the programming or if electronic methods could be used instead.

Ms. Shah arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Wilson noted the cost of the paper was almost as much as the cost of the Apollo trip.

There was a discussion about the ability to transfer items from one line item to another. Ms. Baraka noted the district moves money around in line items, especially near the end of the year, without board approval. Dr. Jenkins said there was an expectation that funds be encumbered by March.

Ms. Baraka said the culminating event at the next community forum would include tee shirts and books for students participants in the programming.

Mr. Sokolovic noted the Bassick plan included a visit to the juvenile detention center. Ms. Shah asked if the purpose of the visit was to contrast with the visit to Fairfield University. She said she was skeptical of the use of shaming of students pushed into the criminal justice system. Mr. Sokolovic said when he was young the Scared Straight program was effective for him, although it would not be beneficial for everybody. Ms. Baraka said such programs have been stopped because data showed they were not effective with young people.

Ms. Shah said she worried about the psychological impact and messaging of students seeing people who look like them

in a setting like a detention center. Mr. Wilson said he understood, but there are also young people out there who don't understand what the endgame is. Ms. Shah suggested something be done around civic engagement instead, such as a visit the capitol in Hartford. Ms. Baraka said from her experience in the system the problem with visits to the criminal justice is the system is not rehabilitative, but a penal colony with a punitive approach.

Dr. Jenkins said he would speak to Mr. Brockenberry about the proposed visit.

Mr. Sokolovic said the committee could give tentative approval of the programs pending Dr. Jenkins's conversations with Central and Bassick.

Ms. Shah suggested a visit to an art gallery in Ridgefield featuring prison art as an alternative to a visit to a detention center. She said a possible theme might be how students can be advocates around criminal justice issues.

Ms Baraka said Dr. Ed Joyner offered to help in the effort, particularly in the middle school program. Dr. Jenkins said the facilitators for the middle school program are Tekenya Monteiro and Natasha Noel.

There was a discussion of using approved vendors to expedite the process of spending money.

Ms. Baraka moved *"to approve with possible revisions cited by Dr. Jenkins to be presented at the regular board meeting of March 11th."* The motion was seconded by Ms. Shah.

Mr. Sokolovic said in order to meet the timeline the committee would have to empower Dr. Jenkins to make the

revisions in time for the March 11th meeting. The other committee members said they were in agreement.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Baraka moved to postpone item 3 on the agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was discussion and possible action to eliminate the March 26th meeting in exchange for a community forum and white paper work session.

Dr. Jenkins said the entire budget had to be encumbered by the end of March. There was a discussion of the expenditures for last year's forum, most of which was absorbed by Ms. Baraka and Dr. Johnson. There were no costs to the district other than the use of the building. The speaker donated his services.

There was a discussion of potential keynote speakers at the forum.

Ms. Baraka said the Board of Education's minutes indicated Dr. Johnson said Title IV funds would cover the costs of the forum and the board approved the forum on February 11th

Ms. Baraka moved *"to eliminate the March 11th meeting in exchange for a community forum and white paper work session."* The motion was seconded by Dr. Jenkins and unanimously approved.

Ms. Baraka moved the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Dr. Jenkins and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

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