

Monday, February 24, 2020

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION(5:30 meeting),  
held February 24, 2020, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon  
Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 5:39 p.m. Present were Chair Jessica Martinez, Secretary Bobbi Brown, Joseph Sokolovic, Sybil Allen, and Joseph Lombard. Vice Chair Hernan Illingworth, Albert Benejan, Chris Taylor, and John Weldon arrived subsequently as noted.

Acting Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present.

The first agenda item was discussion and action to approve a workers' compensation claims administrative services agreement with PMA of New England.

Eric Amado of the city labor relations department said the city and board self-insures for all workers' compensation claims, including heart and hypertension claims. He said the current contract with PMA expired on June 30, 2019, but the provider and the city have agreed to honor the same terms and conditions.

Mr. Amado said the City Council approved the agreement with referral to the Board of Education for approval. He said a consultant helped draft the RFP and to analyze the vendor proposals. He said four proposals were received and scored by a panel of six individuals with responsibilities for workers' compensation and PMA was the highest scoring vendor.

Mr. Amado said one member of the City Council, a former Board of Education member, was quoted in the meeting minutes as describing the contract as being the most open and transparent and effective contract they've seen.

Mr. Illingworth arrived at the meeting.

Mr. Amado said the RFP has produced a lower fee schedule than currently in place and represents a savings to the board and the city.

In response to a question, Mr. Amado said the Internal Service Fund is funded by \$8 million and \$6 million from the board. The claims against the funds are broken out by department by both the city and the board.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *"to enter into an administrative service agreement for workers' compensation claims with PMA of New England."* The motion was seconded by Mr. Lombard and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was discussion and possible action on proposed settlement of Latoya Walker, PPA vs. Bridgeport Board of Education.

Ms. Allen moved *"to go into executive session."* The motion was seconded by Mr. Lombard. Invited to participate were the board, the superintendent, and Attorney Bruce Levin of the city attorney's office.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 5:49 p.m.

The board resumed in public session at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Benejan, Mr. Weldon, and Mr. Taylor were now present.

Mr. Weldon moved that “*we make the settlement as recommended by counsel in the matter of KWM vs. Bridgeport Board of Education.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic and unanimously approved

The next agenda item was discussion and possible approval of the 2020-21 school calendar.

Supt. Testani said he discussed the calendar with the district attendance team to put together a calendar to help keep instruction classroom consistent throughout the year. He said he believed some interruptions have helped to contribute to chronic absenteeism. Changes were made to the starting day of school and there will be a full week of school prior to the Labor Day weekend. Professional development changes were also made.

Mr. Testani said school will be in session on Veterans’ Day. He said it was a great opportunity to bring veterans into the schools on that day. The day before Thanksgiving will be a full day off. The Presidents’ Day weekend will consist of Friday through Monday, like many surrounding districts. The last day of school is currently on June 11th.

Mr. Testani said, after consultation with the BEA, one Jewish holiday in September was eliminated. Once school starts after Labor Day, there will be six consecutive weeks of school before another day off, which will build momentum and improve overall education quality.

In response to a question, Mr. Testani said in-school celebrations such as Spanish Heritage month will be designated on the district calendar.

Ms Brown moved that “*we accept the school calendar for the 2020-2021 school year.*” The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen and approved by a 8-0 vote.

Voting in favor were members Martinez, Illingworth, Benejan, Brown, Allen, Lombard, Weldon and Sokolovic. Mr. Taylor abstained.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod