

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE STUDENTS AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held September 26, 2018, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 4:46 p.m. Present were members Chair Joseph Sokolovic, Ben Walker, and Maria Pereira.

The only agenda item was discussion and possible action on nutrition bid awards.

Present from the nutrition center were Vincent Esposito, Tom Lanese, Angelo Pereira and John Gerrity

Ms. Pereira said the nutrition center provided great information that was really well organized. She noted she had never seen a bid rating sheet where price is not a significant factor.

Mr. Esposito said the vendor score sheet is the evaluation of vendor, not the pricing of the items that they wish to sell, which is contained in the tabulation section.

In response to a question, Mr. Esposito said all five categories are rated equally. Ms. Pereira suggested that brand recognition would be less important than taste-testing in items that aren't even given to students in brand packaging.

Ms. Pereira asked the nutrition center personnel to explain to her any bidder who was more expensive than other bidders but still got the award. She said the board had chosen more expensive bidders when they felt the product or services being provided were more in line with what we needed.

Mr. Esposito said there were only two bidders for the frozen and refrigerated products.

Ms. Pereira moved *“to approve the award of Rosati Ice and Thurston Foods for the frozen and refrigerated food products bid.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Mr. Walker wondered if the committee had to review each bid one by one. Ms. Pereira said the board was the fiduciary.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Walker moved that *“we accept the bid for snack products, the recommended bidder was Thurston.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Pereira.

In response to a question, Mr. Lanese said they were the only bidder. He said the cost was reasonable compared to the past.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved to *“approve Thurston Foods as the provider for condiment and portion control products.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Mr. Lanese said they were the only bidder. He said in previous years there were two or three bidders. He said in

the past the products used to come directly from Heinz, but they are not bidding.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved to “*approve Thurston Foods as the awarded contractor for miscellaneous grocery, meat and dairy.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and unanimously approved.

The next item was on cereal and breakfast products. In response to a question, Mr. Gerrity said a lot of the products purchased are considered thaw and serve, but there is also the option of heating the product. Mr. Lanese said it was possible to get some of the products fresh. Mr. Esposito said a variety is needed.

Ms. Pereira asked why the muffins were not on the bread bid. Mr. Esposito noted there were whole-grain requirements to meet USDA guidelines. Ms. Pereira suggested that grain-related items be put under bread items in the future.

Ms. Pereira said she hears more complaints about breakfast than anything else in the food category. Mr. Walker said he would prefer fresh items, but it may be cost-prohibitive, especially for a local bakery, to make muffins to a particular formula.

Mr. Walker said he hears from the teacher perspective that his wife has to open all the breakfast items and push straws into cartons for her kindergarten students. He noted Thurston Food was located in Wallingford.

Mr. Gerrity said the supervisors met over the summer to revamp the breakfast menu by offering more diverse

offerings. Mr. Lanese said because breakfast is served in the classroom it limits the variety of items that can be provided.

Ms. Pereira expressed concern about awarding to Bake Crafters, who were scored with only 11 points. Mr. Gerrity said they had issues with fulfillment of orders. Mr. Esposito said they were only bidder who provided the seven items in questions. Mr. Gerrity said they got better at fulfilling the orders as the year went on.

On the cereal and breakfast products, Ms. Pereira moved “*to award the contracts to ES Foods, Hadley Farms, Thurston Foods, Super Bakery and Bake Crafters.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved “*to approve the following contracts for miscellaneous direct delivery products: Harvest Hill, Appco, Form Plastics, Lindley, Bake Crafters, J & J Snacks, ES Foods, JSB Industries, Sky Blue, and Pepisco.*”

The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

In response to a question, Mr. Lanese said there was no score for Lindley because we had not dealt with them in the past. Mr. Esposito said we liked the products they offered.

The motion was unanimously approved.

In response to a question, Mr. Esposito said All-American Poly was awarded to provide bag liners. Ms. Pereira noted they received no score on the sheets. Mr. Lanese said if the products don’t meet our standards we would go to the next bidder, but they were the low bidder.

Ms. Pereira said the department should fill out a score sheet on every bidder whether they have a history with the district or not. She said there would be nothing to substantiate the award in court. Mr. Walker said if price had been included on the score sheet that would have handled that.

Ms. Pereira moved “*paper/cleaning supplies being awarded to Ecolab, Interboro, Pyramid Supplies, Thurston, Wallace, All-American Poly, Appco, Benman, Central Poly, and Eastern Bag & Paper.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Ms. Pereira stressed that every single vendor needs to have a rate sheet.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Walker moved that “*we approve bidders Chaves, Calise & Son, JSB Muffin Town and approve these contracts with those bidders.*” The motion was seconded by Ms. Pereira.

Ms. Pereira noted Chaves was more expensive than Calise on a couple of items. She said she was told that the frozen bread being purchased has to be boiled in a pot of water and then baked. Mr. Lanese said most of it is thaw and serve; nothing is raw and requires baking. He said last year, under the previous director, the Park City Burger required some baking. He described it as a nightmare.

In response to a question, Mr. Gerrity said there would be a variety of fresh and frozen products. He noted some items are just not available fresh at a competitive price.

Ms. Pereira said the board purposely put in the bids that if the nutrition center is having problems with the vendor that they are to come to the board.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Walker moved that “*we award the milk and dairy products bid to Wade’s Dairy.*” The motion was seconded by Ms. Pereira.

In response to a question, Mr. Esposito said the current provider did bid. Mr. Lanese said in the past couple of years the current provider had declined with their ability to get product to us on time. He said it may stem from driver turnover and the complications of delivery from New Jersey.

In response to a question, Mr. Esposito said the number one dairy product ordered is chocolate milk, with 1 percent white milk a distant second.

Ms. Pereira said it looked like Wade’s bids were significantly higher. Mr. Esposito said this was a perfect example of pricing not being the only consideration. In response to a question, Mr. Lanese said no one pressured him to pick Wade’s.

Mr. Esposito said over 600,000 cartons of chocolate milk are ordered each year. Mr. Gerrity said the price difference was about 2.5 cents per carton. Mr. Esposito said he was looking to remove the stress in the morning of deliveries.

Ms. Perinea said Maura O’Malley used to get pressure from Mayor Finch to Wade’s Dairy.

Mr. Lanese said at one time Cream-O-Land was very good, but issues developed. He said there were also complications in emergency situations.

Ms. Pereira said she e-mailed Doug Wade when the bid came out and he responded by merely thanking her.

Ms. Pereira said the Wade bid was \$41,000 higher on chocolate milk. Mr. Walker noted Wade was lower on orange juice. Mr. Gerrity calculated Wade was about \$22,800 lower on orange juice.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Walker moved that “*we award the cheese bid to Bake Crafters, Bongards, Con Agra, Land O’ Lakes, Nardone Brothers, Rich Products, Sal’s, and Tasty Brands.*” The motion was seconded by Ms. Pereira.

Ms. Perinea said she saw a lot of low ratings on the score sheets.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved “*to award the commodity vegetable processing bids to JR Simplot and Red Gold.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Mr. Esposito said these were the only two bidders.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved “*to approve awarding the commodity food processing bid to National Food Group.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

In response to a question, Mr. Gerrity said they were scored a 2 on reliability due to problems with orders a couple of years ago, but they have since improved, particularly from the middle of the last school year. Mr. Lanese said they are located in Michigan.

The motion was unanimously approved.

In response to a question, Mr. Gerrity said this is the first year the district is peanut-free in every school. Peanut butter was eliminated last year in elementary schools, but not the high schools. He said soy butter is being offered as a substitute for peanut butter and it is pretty widely accepted.

Mr. Gerrity said there were no bidders in this category, so the district will have to get price quotes from different sources. Ms. Pereira said if the amount purchased was under \$25,000 it did not have to go out to bid.

Ms. Pereira moved *“to award the commodity chicken, turkey, beef processing to Tyson, Yang’s 5th Taste, Pilgrim’s Pride, Maid-Rite, JTM, Jennie-O, Comida Vida, and Asian Food Solution.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

In response to a question, Mr. Gerrity said raw chicken is purchased that is sent to a processor that converts it into finished products.

Ms. Pereira noted Jennie-O and Pilgrim’s Pride received some bad ratings. Mr. Gerrity said Pilgrim’s Pride had a recall and there were issues with deliveries in the past. He added there were delivery problems with Jennie-O in this school year, but they are the only turkey processor. He said



a lot of companies have to use common carriers to deliver the product and this is where the problem lies.

The motion was unanimously approved.

There was a brief discussion of Mr. Walker's experience with chickens, quail, and eggs.

Ms. Pereira moved "*to award the commodity egg product processing to Michael Foods.*" In response to a question, Mr. Gerrity said they were the only bidder.

Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

In response to a question, Mr. Gerrity said fruit and vegetables were bid on a weekly basis. Mr. Lanese said there are three or four vendors that send their prices sheets in weekly. He added there are price fluctuations.

In response to a question, Mr. Gerrity said the district's one hundred percent community eligibility participation means that the reimbursement is at the free rate as opposed to the free/reduced price rate, which will lead to more revenue. Mr. Esposito said we're expecting upwards of \$200,000 more each month if we use due diligence and serve the meals by federal regulations.

Mr. Esposito said by identifying every child on a state-assisted program or those who are transient or homeless the district met the criteria that allows claims at the hundred percent level. He said medical assistance was allowed by the federal government to be included in the formula as well as displaced Puerto Rican children. He said the one hundred percent criteria was good for four years.

In response to a question, Mr. Gerrity said the additional funds could be used for capital improvements. He said some kitchen equipment is old and needs to be replaced. Mr. Pereira said there were five road trucks.

Ms. Pereira said she thought the presenters were very well prepared. Mr. Walker said this was one of the best meetings we've had on budget issues.

Ms. Pereira said she wanted to stress the nutrition center could not change vendors awarded contracts without coming to the board.

Mr. Walker moved the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Ms. Pereira and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod