

**CITY OF NORWALK
JOINT SERVICES STUDY GROUP
BOARD OF ESTIMATE AND TAXATION/BOARD OF EDUCATION
APRIL 30, 2009**

ATTENDANCE: Friedrich Wilms, Chairman; Leo Mellow; Jack Chairamonte,
Rosa Murray (6:10 p.m.)

STAFF:

City of Norwalk: Thomas Hamilton, Director of Finance, Gerald Foley, Purchasing;
Ossie Lewis, Director of Management and Budgets;

Norwalk Public Schools: Dr. Salvatore Corda, Superintendent; Dan Cook, George Giannitti,
Donna Vaccarella

OTHERS: Sue Delong, Norwalk Federation of Teachers

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Wilms called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m. and provided an overview with the purpose of the group, which is now being called the Joint Services Study Group, Board of Estimate and Taxation/Board of Education.

Mr. Wilms stated the purpose of this meeting was to lay the groundwork to identify ways to free up resources, whereby efficiencies can be achieved through consolidation of efforts and areas of responsibilities. He provided a list of areas for potential inquiry to serve as the basis of discussion in determining areas of overlap or similarity in workflow and output.

Mr. Foley said that discussions had been started on various BOE accounts and that there may be some savings in the area of insurance, which should be added to the list. He also stated that he was asked to look at item 13, Building Maintenance and Management, which is a big number. Mr. Hamilton asked about Purchasing, and Mr. Foley said he had done 1,500 purchase orders. Mr. Cook replied that the Norwalk Public Schools had issued over 7,000 purchase orders. Mr. Cook added that he did not know if it was necessarily good business practice to add an additional twenty percent more purchasing efforts if they were not in the same area, because the City's spending on operational equipment and supplies may not overlap with instructional requisitions.

In response to discussion regarding facilities management, Dr. Corda indicated that the BOE does not necessarily have painters or electricians that are idle that could be assigned to work on City projects.

Mr. Mellow asked what the dollar levels were involved to determine a prioritization list and to see where it was worth the most effort to examine efficiencies. Mr. Hamilton said he could go back and re-look at the budget book but suggested that the group pick one area as a “pilot study” that would not be disruptive to existing services or projects.

Ms. Murray arrived at 6:10 p.m.

Dr. Corda stated that identifying “capacity” is very difficult as the BOE relies on people services, and any significant savings potential would mean fewer staff and that has far reaching impact beyond the realm of the budget management. He added that consolidation ultimately affects instructional spending, and to do this would require an evaluation of data. Mr. Hamilton suggested a chart with the number of staff/the dollars spent on outside services, etc. and the intent would be a “re-engineering” rather than combined areas of workflows.

Dr. Corda suggested the development of an analysis model, apply the methodology to each area to test and build upon it as a way to proceed. Mr. Wilms agreed and recommended to select one area of low risk to do a resource analysis that could then be applied to evaluate on each department on the list.

Mr. Hamilton suggested item 2, Mail Room & Internal Main Delivery Services would be a good area to start with, as they are physically housed only one floor apart at City Hall and have much of the same work. He also indicated he would have Mr. Lewis start by gathering information and map out workflows to compare a process for streamlining functions in other areas, and suggested Mr. Cook do the same for the Norwalk Public Schools.

Ms. Murray asked to look at the co-operative piece first to find commonalities rather than “drilling down” the list. Mr. Hamilton responded that we do already have areas where this is done, for example the renewal electric procurement contract.

Mr. Wilms summarized by stating that the charge is to be open and transparent with this analysis, and it has to be a win-win situation for both the City and the Norwalk Public Schools before any re-structuring of responsibilities is recommended.

Mr. Wilms suggested that the group meet next month, and it was agreed to schedule the next meeting for May 28 at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Knox
Telesco Secretarial Services