

**CITY OF BRIDGEPORT  
EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE  
JANUARY 13, 2010**

**ATTENDANCE:** Councilmembers Denese Taylor Moye, Chair; M. Evette Brantley, (132<sup>nd</sup>); Bob Walsh, (132<sup>nd</sup>); Andre Baker, (139<sup>th</sup>); Lydia Martinez, (137<sup>th</sup>); Thomas McCarthy, (133<sup>rd</sup>); Manual Ayala, (137<sup>th</sup>); Amy Vizzo Paniccia;

**STAFF:** Thomas White, Legislative Services Director;

**OTHER:** Paul Timpanelli, Bridgeport Regional Business Council; Gail Solis, Bridgeport Regional Business Council; Leticia Colon, Board of Education; Patrick Crossin, Board of Education; Maria Pereira, Board of Education;

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Taylor-Moye called the meeting to order at 6:50 p.m.

**FORMATION SESSION: STATUS REPORT FROM BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL  
BUSINESS COUNCIL ON PARTNERSHIP FOR BRIDGEPORT EDUCATION  
ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY PROJECT**

Mr. Paul Timpanelli from the Bridgeport Regional Business Council provided a status report on the Partnership for Bridgeport Education Accountability and Transparency Project. He explained that the Bridgeport Regional Business Council first presented this to the Board of Education about 4 years ago to enable the business community to have a role in improving the accountability and transparency of financial operations of the Board of Education. The proposal presented in 2005-2006 was a four-phase initiative to result in recommendations that would improve business and management operations to enable dollars and resources to be reallocated to improve classroom performance. The City Council reviewed and approved the proposal. The Business Council committed to raise the necessary dollars to undertake the project.

He said there are approximately 25-30 not-for-profit agencies that have signed on and are supportive of the initiative. He said the Bridgeport Regional Business Council has taken the opportunity to manage the initiative. He said the estimate for the cost of completing the initiative was between \$.5M and \$2M. The business community determined that in order for them to be engaged in the arena of education reform, the Council thought the best role for them to play was to improve financial accountability and transparency. A process needed to be created to identify financial relationships between the school system and the Board of Education. Previously, the relationship had been ill-defined. The Business Council, the Board of Education, the City of Bridgeport, and the administration agreed to hire a consultant 2007, which the Business Council paid \$115,000 for. They came up with a series of

recommendations, that if implemented, would enable further delineation to be created that would clearly identify the financial reporting authority and the financial accountability of the Board of Education.

They then went out to bid for a second consultant that was paid for by the City of Bridgeport and the Board of Education, and was charged with implementing the recommendations. Today, the recommendations are almost fully implemented that now clearly define the financial reporting responsibility and the financial authority between the Board of Education and the City of Bridgeport. The Board of Education agreed from the beginning that once the recommendations were implemented and if they were satisfied with the implementation, they would then give the go-ahead for Phase 3. He explained that Phase 3 is the Business Council's effort to analyze the operational, business and management systems of the Bridgeport School System in an effort to identify obvious and glaring opportunities for potential financial savings. The Board of Education approved entering Phase 3 approximately 6 months ago, and the third consultant was signed on at the end of November 2009. It is the Gibson Consulting Group from Austin, TX, and they have been working in the City on several occasions to date. They will be conducting site visits towards the end of January with the Board of Education to review the operational, business and management systems. He explained that the Board of Education said if that review ends with their identification of major areas of potential savings, the Business Council would then go to the Board of Education for approval to enter into Phase 4. Phase 4 is the process that the Business Council recommended to hire a fourth consultant that would analyze in detail the entire operation of the City of Bridgeport's School System, in an effort to identify cost savings and areas of further efficiencies. The Business Council said they feel they can identify approximately \$5M in savings, and it is their hope that all involved will agree that it can be reinvested back into the classrooms to improve student performance.

Mr. Timpanelli explained that the Business Council paid for Phase 1; the City of Bridgeport and the Board of Education paid for Phase 2; the Business Council and the State of Connecticut paid for Phase 3; and Phase 4's cost was agreed to be shared between the Business Council (1/3), the State of Connecticut (1/3), and the City of Bridgeport and the Board of Education (1/3). If the Board of Education and/or the City of Bridgeport agree to not put money in because they can't afford it, the Business Council will raise the money. He estimated that Phase 4's cost will be between \$.5M and \$1.5M. He said that if the City of Bridgeport invests \$175,000 and the Board of Education invests \$250,000, and the operational review is complete, he said their estimate is that they will find 5-10% of their annual operating budget in potential savings. That equates to approximately \$.5M in savings for the Board of Education's \$250,000 initial investment. It would be a one-year analysis, the Business Council would then give the Board of Education and the City Council a report outlining the savings, and it would be up to the Board of Education and the City Council to implement it. He said that all the consultant groups are different, with the first from Houston, TX, the second from Shelton, CT, and the third from Austin, TX. There are no cost savings involved in having a consultant group located closer to Bridgeport. The target date for the completion of Phase 3 is the end of March, 2010.

Some discussion took place among Mr. Timpanelli and members of the City Council. Mr. McCarthy noted that three new Board of Education members were present, and he thanked them for attending the meeting. He thanked the Business Council for undertaking the project, and he hoped for positive results. Mr. Timpanelli said he and the Business Council are pleased with the cooperation and support they have received from the Board of Education, and he said they feel the results will be significant. Those results will then be presented when they are complete. Mr. Walsh said he had mentioned to the Bond Council that the savings be bonded if possible. Mr. Timpanelli reminded everyone that the Business Council's role is to make recommendations on how dollars can be saved, and that an analysis of this sort has never been done before anywhere in the State of Connecticut. Mr. Crossin said that the Board of Education now receives monthly financial reports, which had not been a practice in the past.

More discussion took place regarding the process and progress of the study.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**\*\* COUNCILMEMBER MCCARTHY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**\*\* COUNCILMEMBER MARTINEZ SECONDED.**

**\*\* MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn Marr  
Telesco Secretarial Services