



**TOWN OF ROCKY HILL  
BOARD OF EDUCATION FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES/MOTIONS**

**In order to comply with Connecticut General Statutes regarding minutes of meetings, the following will be used to record information during all public meetings that take place. An original must be submitted to the Town Clerk of Rocky Hill within 48 hours of the meeting being adjourned. Motions should be complete, showing the maker and second of the motion as well as how each member voted. Unanimous votes may be listed as unanimous.**

NAME OF PUBLIC BOARD OR COMMISSION	Board of Education Finance Committee
DATE MEETING AGENDA POSTED	April 20, 2009
LOCATION	Training/Conference Room
DATE OF MEETING	April 22, 2009
TIME MEETING STARTED	7:04 p.m.
PERSON PREPARING MEETING MINUTES	Jo-Anne Booth, Recording Secretary
VERBATIM NOTES TAKEN	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
AUDIO, VIDEO OR LIVE TRANSMISSION OF MEETING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

**MEMBERS PRESENT AT MEETING**

1. Rene (Skip) Rivard	2. Maria Mennella (Entered at 7:07 p.m.)
3. Catherine Vargas	4. Also present: Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar
5. Interim Finance Director Frank Connolly	6. Nadine Bell (Bd. of Ed.)
7. Loraine Saccente (Head Bookkeeper) (Left at 7:50 p.m.)	8. Scott Coleman (R.H. Resident) (Left at 7:37 p.m.)
9.	10.

NUMBER REQUIRED FOR QUORUM   2   QUORUM PRESENT  Yes  No

**TEXT MOTIONS AND RESULTS VOTES**

1st MOTION  Passed  Failed  Tabled

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Maria Mennella, to make "CIP" Item 2. on this evening's agenda. It had been part of Item 1. originally. (The original Item 2. on this evening's agenda became Item 3. and the original Item 3. became Item 4., etc.)**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

2nd MOTION       Passed       Failed       Tabled

**Moved by Maria Menella, seconded by Catherine Vargas, to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

LINK TO WORKING NOTES (will be attached if available)

ACTION

CORRECTION(S) (will be attached if available)

TIME MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:48 p.m.

TIME DELIVERED TO TOWN CLERK: \_\_\_\_\_.

Town of Rocky Hill  
Board of Education  
Finance Committee Meeting Working Notes  
April 22, 2009

A Finance Committee meeting of the Rocky Hill Board of Education was held on Wednesday, April 22, 2009 in the training /conference room. Chairman Rene (Skip) Rivard called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Present were: Maria Mennella (Entered at 7:07 p.m.) and Catherine Vargas. Also present was Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Villar, Interim Finance Director Frank Connolly, Nadine Bell (Bd. of Ed.), Loraine Saccente, Head Bookkeeper (Left at 7:50 p.m.) and Scott Coleman, R.H. Resident (Left at 7:37 p.m.).

Chairman Rivard told Mr. Scott Coleman that as a member of the public, he was assuming that he wanted to speak this evening. Mr. Coleman thanked Chairman Rivard.

Mr. Coleman told everyone that he wanted to give them an education this evening. He showed toner to everyone and he said it costs \$3.00 per bottle. He recently found out that the town side and the Board of Education side have been purchasing toner for two to three times the going rate. These have not been purchased on bid. The budget for this for the Board of Education is \$25,000. He used to be in the toner business so he knows the vendors and he knows the real cost that is involved with this product. He had asked Interim Finance Director Connolly to produce eighteen months of invoices for him. The Board of Education was paying \$42 for a cartridge that they could have gotten for \$6. For a \$99 cartridge, they could have gotten that for \$25. Mrs. Bell asked Mr. Coleman if he meant the same cartridge and he said it would be for the same exact cartridge. Mr. Coleman said if everything is added up that tens of thousands of dollars of waste are going to the vendor from both the town and the Board of Education. He showed everyone a sample of an older cartridge. He showed how the plug is taken out and where the toner can be put in, etc. He told everyone that the company is selling the cartridge to them for \$100 and everyone else is selling this cartridge for \$25 to \$32. There is no benefit to the users or to the students. He explained that he has been using recycled cartridges for years.

Mr. Coleman said things have to be gone out to bid on for anything over \$4,000. This is the Board of Education policy and this is per the Town Charter. He has just had a meeting with Town Manager Gilbert and he said Interim Finance Director Connolly has given him a lot of time. Mr. Coleman is guessing that the vendor has been selling across the state and it isn't even on the bid list. The Board of Education's Technology Department and the Town's Technology Department thought they were. He has spoken to the state buyer who is aware of the problem now. He is probably going to ask the Attorney General to do some research into this because he thinks this is statewide. There are people on the bid list who are far cheaper. He was told several times that the Board of Education was buying under the state bid. His guess is that the Board of Education will be able to save \$15,000.

Chairman Rivard asked Mr. Coleman what happens with regards to warranties the Board of Education might have with different companies who maintain their equipment if they used a refurbished toner. Mr. Coleman said the toner itself has a warranty against any problems with the printer. He said this town has been using remanufactured cartridges for years. This is nothing new and everybody does it. Chairman Rivard asked Mr. Coleman if he is talking mostly about dry toners because he knows his wet inks have clogged his jets. Mr. Coleman said wet inks are fine if the right ones are used and there shouldn't be any problems.

Mr. Coleman passed around a piece of paper that had on it the actual prices the Board of Education has paid versus the prices he has written in. He put Interim Finance Director Connolly in touch with a vendor he knows that does the recycling rather than having the Board of Education buy through a distributor. Mr. Coleman said he also gave the name of this same vendor to Mr. Rich Cooke (Facilities Director). Mr. Cooke has already received a sample. Mr. Coleman told them that the present vendor they use is selling them remanufactured cartridges for a higher amount than the new price. This vendor is also including fuel surcharges and freight charges. He is going to ask the state to look at this because it is more than just Rocky Hill that is involved.

Mr. Coleman passed out a request to everyone. He said that he had spent a lot of time working on what he just talked about. He spent \$40 requesting copies. He mentioned that it is one thing when someone requests something personally and it is another thing when someone requests something to try to help someone and they get billed. Those charges are allowed to be waived under the Freedom of Information Act. He asked that the charges to him be waived based upon this Act as well as based on some copies that were made for him that he didn't request but that he had just requested to view. He returned those copies now. He showed a copy of an e-mail that he sent originally to Interim Finance Director Connolly. Mr. Coleman mentioned that there was a mathematical error. He asked this Committee that the money be refunded considering that he just saved them probably \$15,000 for this year alone and this doesn't consider the future.

Chairman Rivard asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if this type of a request is an administrative decision on his part. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it clearly is. Chairman Rivard said this doesn't have to go before the Board of Education or before this Committee. Superintendent Dr. Villar didn't think it was the purview of the Board of Education at all. He said he was very appreciative of Mr. Coleman's efforts in saving the Board of Education \$15,000 but he will reserve judgment as to whether or not they actually saved any money. They will certainly explore their options on anything that can save them money. He said he will be more cautious on concluding that any money has been saved at the moment.

Mr. Coleman said he was going to make copies available of the Town Charter that he had. He referred to Section 701 of this and he said it states that the purchasing agent shall purchase all supplies, materials and equipment required by all Commissions, Boards, departments and offices of the town, except the Board of Education, with respect to the purchase of supplies and materials that are clearly education oriented. According to what this states, he assumes that the town should be purchasing the toner or other like supplies that are common across the Board of Education and the town. He told this Committee that he was presenting this to them and that they can do what they would like to with it. He is going to present this to the Town Council as well. This also states that on a monthly basis, the Board of Education should provide a summary of all expenditures and unencumbered funds to the Town Council. Mrs. Bell said this is part of the monthly finance report that is done. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the monthly financial statements are provided directly to the town. These show all the encumbrances.

Mr. Coleman knew that computers were leased in the past and he told the Board of Education that this is not their intention to do this in the future. He showed them the breakdown of buying versus leasing. He told them to assume that they are purchasing one hundred machines. The cost would be \$220,000 and the lease price would be \$301,000 which is approximately 36% cost on lease versus purchasing. He told them in the future that they might want to consider about leasing technology because it is very costly especially if they are going to own the technology in the end seeing it has already been paid for. Mrs. Mennella said they don't lease their equipment through the state but they purchase it.

Mr. Coleman said he spoke to Mr. Fred Ames and Interim Finance Director Connolly. They have discussed the purchasing of new computers. Mr. Coleman said he didn't know if this was the place to give his feelings on the purchasing of the new computers that are in the budget. Chairman Rivard said they could take this data under advisement as they go into looking at new equipment.

Mr. Coleman said the Board of Education is looking to buy two hundred new computers for \$120,000. According to Mr. Ames, they are looking to put these in the elementary schools. One hundred of these computers are replacing used computers that were received as gifts. Mr. Coleman believes the computers that are in the schools now are adequate based upon the software that is being used on them now. From what he can tell, they have the same one hundred computers that they had in inventory four years ago. One thought of his is that the new computers are not needed and this is a technology opinion. The new computers won't improve the quality of education. He didn't believe there were any speed issues involved with these computers by running Microsoft Office which is being used now. If new computers were to be bought, he would put these in the high school and not in the elementary schools. He was told that the computers would be replaced with computers that have LCD screens and he was given the explanation that this is because they generate less heat. He said two computers in a room don't generate heat. Mrs. Mennella said the computers with the LCD screens use less room. Mr. Coleman asked why \$100 would be spent just because they use less room. He is trying to give them a way to save money and spend it somewhere else maybe where it can really benefit education. He is not seeing the benefit from the expenditures they are suggesting. He can find them used equipment to replace their used equipment which would be equivalent to the equipment they bought three years ago for a savings of \$100,000.

He thinks this is a thought they might want to think about if they are really looking to save money and put it into other technologies rather than wasting this on new computers.

Chairman Rivard said students need to see things that look contemporary in order for them to maintain enthusiasm with them. He told Mr. Coleman that they will take everything he has said under advisement and asked him if he will give them time to review these documents as they go into the budget year.

Mrs. Vargas told Mr. Coleman that they haven't gotten a final number from the Town Council so she assumed this would be part of their discussion. Mr. Coleman told them that he is not under an agenda but he is looking to give them enough ammunition. Mrs. Vargas said they aren't to that point yet and the Board of Education wouldn't be meeting with the Town Council until Monday. They probably won't get a number until May 15, 2009. She told Mr. Coleman they could bring whatever information he shares with this Committee to the full Board of Education when they have their discussion and go further from there. Mrs. Vargas referred to this Committee making any decisions. Mr. Coleman said he isn't looking for decisions and he was just trying to give them input on things he found by looking at the budget that may help them. Mrs. Vargas referred to the document that Mr. Coleman had and she asked him if he could share that with Superintendent Dr. Villar so that he could get them copies. Mr. Coleman told her that this it is only noteworthy now and he will make sure they all get an e-mail with regards to this. Mrs. Vargas said she would rather have something she can read when looking at the whole picture and she appreciates his input. Mr. Coleman said he wanted to get in when they had a meeting before the budget.

Mr. Coleman referred to annual software insurance which is for software licensing. He said this Board of Education spends approximately \$40,000 per year on this. There are approximately eight hundred and fifty computers in the schools. For each license, approximately \$44 is charged per year.

These licenses are supposed to assure that the software can be upgraded at any time. This money is “going down the tube” if the software is not upgraded on an annual or on an every two year basis. The school can get Microsoft Office for \$16 to \$20 per computer. This comes to \$17,000 for this district. For the students, the last version of Microsoft Office was the 2003 one. This district has been spending \$40,000 for the last six years on this software that could have been bought once for \$17,000. He was told by the vendors for this that this district is wasting money if it is paying every year for these licenses. Mrs. Vargas didn’t think they were told this. She understood that if there is a license, it has to be renewed every year. Mr. Coleman said they own the license if they buy it. There are some benefits they aren’t even using for some of these licenses.

Chairman Rivard said the Board of Education has a Technology Subcommittee. Mr. Coleman said he would be happy to talk to Mr. Charles Wisnioski. Chairman Rivard told Mr. Coleman that he thinks this data would best be presented to the Technology Committee for their review. Superintendent Dr. Villar pointed out that they pay Mr. Ames’ salary to investigate these things and he would be more than happy to come and share from his perspective counterpoint to much of what Mr. Coleman presents. Chairman Rivard said this is above and beyond his level of expertise. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this Board of Education has also worked with CREC which has come out and audited its technology in the past. CREC has experts that this Board of Education can consult. He is sure they can have CREC consultants come and share their opinions on many of these topics if it is necessary. Mrs. Bell asked if this was addressed in the audit they had of the Technology Department. Superintendent Dr. Villar said all aspects of the program were reviewed last year by CREC and recommendations were made.

Chairman Rivard told Mr. Coleman that he would like to have the title of any documents that he passes on to the Technology Department. Mr. Coleman said okay and mentioned he is sharing what he learned. He said he is not meaning to be confrontational. He told them that he is trying to save them some money and he is seeing if they can put the money in the right place especially in this economy. He is not looking to hurt the children or take anything from them.

Mr. Coleman said he had another issue that has been going on since the last meeting and it hadn’t been resolved. Chairman Rivard asked Mr. Coleman how much more time he needed because the Finance Committee had a moderate agenda for this evening. Mr. Coleman said he just needed two to three minutes. He is still on the case with regards to the website. The primary reason is he didn’t think the money invested in the website is giving the people and the children of this town, the best that they could have gotten for any money. A lot of towns are using volunteers, like him, to help with websites because they don’t have the skills in-house to have this done. A superior website can be put together with his interest and his skills. The Board of Education has already spent upwards of \$5,000 for something that it could have gotten for nothing. The present website could have been done by a high school student in 2000 he said. This will never be the website of tomorrow. He isn’t looking for any money but he is looking to provide them with the best website that the children, parents and the town can have. He didn’t think this was too much to ask. The other issue he has is that he feels this violated the Town Charter as well as the Board of Education policies with regards to the contract and the way the website was paid for. He is going to file a complaint with the Board of Education and the Town Council requesting that this be researched more thoroughly in order to determine if both of those documents were violated. Chairman Rivard thought the discussion or conversation on this should be stopped if a complaint is going to be filed pending the results of that. Mr. Coleman said this isn’t going to be a legal complaint. One of the things that started his “ball rolling” is that money is being wasted on things that they don’t have to waste money on. This money could have gone to two or three SmartBoards or ten or twenty computers. He said this is not personal and he has nothing against Superintendent Dr. Villar.

Mr. Coleman just thinks they could have worked together and have done something really great. He told this Committee that they are the finance people and they authorize the money. He thinks this should be out of the budget. He doesn't think they should pay for the upkeep of the website and he has offered to upkeep the current website or to develop a new one for no charge. He said all of this is principle to him now. Chairman Rivard said all of this is taken under advisement. Mr. Coleman appreciated this and he apologized. He thanked everyone for their time.

## **1. TIME CARDS**

Superintendent Dr. Villar said Interim Finance Director Connolly would like to speak to this Committee about some procedures with the time cards. Interim Finance Director Connolly had everyone introduce themselves to Mrs. Loraine Saccente. Interim Finance Director Connolly told everyone that Mrs. Saccente is the Chief Bookkeeper in the office.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said as being a new set of eyes in the office, he has an advantage of coming in to see how things have been for years and to see that there are different ways of doing things. One of the things that has struck him is the amount of labor intensive effort that is being undertaken for a mundane routine type of task which is for the time cards. The time cards are filled out at the school level by hand, signed off and reviewed at the school level and added up at the school level. These are physically transported to the business office. Mrs. Vargas asked who these time cards are for and Mrs. Saccente explained who they are for. They are for the secretaries, the paraprofessionals and all part timers. Chairman Rivard asked how many people they are talking about. Mrs. Saccente said there are four hundred and twenty time cards total. These include two hundred and eleven for the part time personnel, twenty-six paraprofessionals, thirty-two cards for the secretaries, as well as all of the substitute teachers, tutors, etc. There is a bi-weekly payroll. The time cards are filled out and then the calculations and verifications are double checked.

Mrs. Bell said there are paraprofessionals who are assigned nineteen hours per week. She asked if these have to get cross checked to make sure that nineteen hour paraprofessionals aren't putting in for twenty-four hours. Mrs. Saccente said yes and she said this is part of this.

Chairman Rivard asked Mrs. Saccente how many manhours it takes to go through this. Mrs. Saccente said it takes maybe three to four hours every week to go through just the time cards. Chairman Rivard asked if they are looking to automate this system somehow. Interim Finance Director Connolly said yes. One vendor has come in to give a presentation to them about automating the time clock system. The vendor used a figure of 2% to 3% of the payroll as to where the loss comes in by having this done by hand. The vendor couldn't believe what kind of a system this Board of Education is using because it is quite outdated.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said the first system they looked at is a web based system. The employee can either swipe an ID card or they can go online and log in. Chairman Rivard asked if everyone carries an ID card. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they do. Chairman Rivard asked if these are magnetic strip ones. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they currently aren't. Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to the system they looked at and he said the magnetic strip would be glued to the back of the ID card. This is a way of making this integrated with the payroll system as well as automating the time cards. He asked Mrs. Saccente to explain how she enters everything, etc. Mrs. Saccente explained all of this.

Chairman Rivard asked Mrs. Saccente how many times she has been challenged by Staff. Mrs. Saccente said she has been with this district for twenty-four years. She recalled one time that there had been a tutor situation when Dr. Vautour was the Superintendent. Chairman Rivard asked Mrs. Saccente if they have ever been challenged by someone who was seeking unemployment who had to come back to the time cards. Mrs. Saccente said fortunately that they haven't been.

Interim Finance Director Connolly referred to the issue of people who are missing two or three hours on their time cards. Mrs. Saccente explained what has to be done in these cases. She explained how all of the time cards have to be stamped with regards to them being paid. For substitute teachers, they have to record this on a substitute teacher tracking list. It is very labor intensive.

Chairman Rivard asked Mrs. Saccente what she wants. Superintendent Dr. Villar said one of the things that he and Interim Finance Director Connolly have been talking about is identifying systems that need to be upgraded that could begin to improve their efficiency. Interim Finance Director Connolly is very open to the use of technology to make them more efficient. He is working on identifying vendors. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they most likely will bring a laundry list of some systems to the Finance Committee. They are going to seek permission to be able to upgrade systems in the event they find themselves with funds towards the end of this year. The federal stimulus monies that are coming are supposed to be for systems' upgrades and improvements in some areas which may assist them. They are looking for the go ahead to research and move towards these types of systems. They wanted to introduce the Finance Committee to the fact that this is where they need to go and what they need to do. They aren't prepared to ask for action at the moment.

Chairman Rivard anticipated that this is a "no brainer" with regards to investigating this, etc. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they will bring a list to this Committee first. Last year, there was an issue with the funds and expenditure of them and they are going to make sure they are not in that situation this year. The next meeting will be a real critical one. They are looking for some recommendations for some systems beginning with time cards. Chairman Rivard asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if they are looking for an acknowledgment from the Finance Committee for them to go ahead and do this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said yes.

Mrs. Vargas asked if these systems have to go through some kind of a bidding process. Interim Finance Director Connolly didn't think they would be going through a bidding process because these systems are fairly specialized. Mrs. Vargas told Interim Finance Director Connolly when he is presenting this to make sure the documentation is there and she explained more. Superintendent Dr. Villar agreed.

Chairman Rivard explained about thumb readers that were just put in where he works. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is a nice system and they have this in Stonington.

Mrs. Bell said when a cost benefit analysis is done that she would like to see what is being done with the six hours that Mrs. Saccente isn't spending on the time cards. Superintendent Dr. Villar said around \$8,000 to \$9,000 of overtime is happening right now in the Central Office. Mrs. Bell said it would be helpful if this can be shown in the cost benefit. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the time cards are taking a lot of time and people could be used more efficiently. This may even improve the services to the employees with the Human Resource piece. Mrs. Saccente said a big thing is the absences of the employees because they want to know what their vacation time is, etc.

Chairman Rivard asked if the time cards are kept for seven years. Interim Finance Director Connolly said they are either kept for three years or for seven years. Mrs. Saccente said they keep them for as long as the state requires and they ask for a record retention schedule. She believes they keep these for three years but it may be for six years. Mrs. Bell asked where these are kept in the file room. Chairman Rivard asked if the time cards are weekly cards. Mrs. Saccente said they are bi-weekly.

Chairman Rivard asked if a motion was needed from this Committee. Interim Finance Director Connolly said no and said that this is just informational.

Interim Finance Director Connolly read aloud a section from the Board of Education policies with regards to bids. He mentioned that a couple of vendors are being looked at.

**Moved by Catherine Vargas, seconded by Maria Mennella, to make “CIP” Item 2. on this evening’s agenda. It had been part of Item 1. originally. (The original Item 2. on this evening’s agenda became Item 3. and the original Item 3. became Item 4., etc. )**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

## **2. CIP**

Interim Finance Director Connolly said the town has an operating budget for working on the schools. This covers mostly the day-to-day things. He spent a couple of days last week with Mr. Cooke so that they could tour the schools one by one. Interim Finance Director Connolly passed out to everyone an example of a Board of Education Adopted CIP for Stonington Public Schools. For Rocky Hill, the gym floors haven’t been touched for twenty, thirty or forty years with regards to bringing them back down to the original wood. These expenditures get knocked out when dealing with the day-to-day things at schools. Mrs. Vargas said she has gone before the Town Council telling them that she didn’t think they know the difference between Capital Improvements and maintenance. She told them there is a difference between these things for accounting purposes. Interim Finance Director Connolly told her that she is correct. He explained that they are already having dialogue with Town Officials on this approach. He explained the direction he sees the Board of Education going in. He is going to start developing a list with Mr. Cooke and he is trying to get a schedule. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the Board of Education needs to make sure things get done. A discussion followed.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said there is a two step approach on the control of how this works. The Board of Education would adopt its own Capital Improvement Plan of what needs to be done by itemizing this and this will go to the Town Council which has to adopt and approve the items. He gave more details about this and a discussion took place.

Interim Finance Director Connolly asked them if they have developed a systematic list for a five year plan that shows how much they need in order to keep the schools going at a uniformed level of expenditures. Mrs. Vargas said they’ve had a list. Chairman Rivard said they have had an annualized list. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he hasn’t seen a system that states that so much furniture is going to be replaced, etc. Mrs. Vargas said this has always been in Capital Improvements. Chairman Rivard didn’t think they have ever put a plan out with regards to what should be done in the next five years. Mrs. Vargas said they have had a rolling list.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said he and Town Manager Gilbert have been very collaborative. He said this discussion has moved forward. He mentioned how the finance piece of this is being spoken about now but it also has to be moved to the Facilities Committee. The lists that have been generated have to be revisited. Interim Finance Director Connolly has to go with Mr. Cooke to tour the buildings again in order to get a new look at where they are in 2009. The list has to be reprioritized. Recommendations will then be brought to the Facilities Committee.

Chairman Rivard asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he has the old list somewhere. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they have the facilities list as well as everything that was produced in several reports. There are a couple of major issues such as what the bond issues are of major construction. Smaller in-house things have stalled because everyone is waiting for the bond. In his previous district, he has seen this happen.

Mrs. Vargas asked Superintendent Dr. Villar in his discussions with Town Manager Gilbert if he discussed her changing the budget book so that there is a Capital Improvements section as well as a maintenance section. Mrs. Vargas understood that the list is going to go to the Joint Facilities Committee. Superintendent Dr. Villar said his understanding is that the Capital Improvements will be under the Joint Facilities Committee. Mrs. Vargas said the Joint Facilities Committee is supposed to just be for maintenance purposes. She asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he is suggesting that there be a Capital Improvements list as well as a maintenance list. Mrs. Vargas said the Town would be determining the dollars to be spent on each of these. She thinks there is one number now that covers maintenance and Capital Improvements.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said this would be a joint effort. The Board of Education will identify what needs to be done. The Staff levels will be worked at to develop a list that will be presented to the Board of Education. There will be action by the Board of Education on the specific priority items it has and this will be turned over to the town asking them to approve it. This will be a collaborative effort.

Mrs. Vargas asked if the Facilities Committee will prioritize the items and then have the town price them. Interim Finance Director Connolly said they will price the items at the Staff level. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Mr. Cooke and Interim Finance Director Connolly have been working together to start this work. The recommendations of the prioritized needs would be brought with costs attached. Mrs. Vargas confirmed that the list coming to the Facilities Committee will have a dollar amount associated with the items. Interim Finance Director Connolly said the sample he just passed out with regards to Stonington Public Schools will be the format. Mrs. Vargas said they have to make sure what is being proposed and what is reality are "jiving". Interim Finance Director Connolly said a long process is involved and it takes time to do it. They thought they would let everyone know the direction they are starting to go in thinking wise. Mrs. Vargas said the budget goes into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this wouldn't be for this budget. This will take months to develop.

Mrs. Vargas referred to the current money in the budget and she asked what is going to happen with that. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is coming under the jurisdiction of the Joint Facilities Committee as to what it is going to be spent on.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said they have important work to do to get the prioritization. He explained more. Chairman Rivard thinks it is important that they have their strategic plan in place to start a document like this.

Mrs. Bell referred to the upcoming Facilities Committee meeting where they will be prioritizing and she asked if this is for the coming year. Superintendent Dr. Villar said in the upcoming meeting that they have to talk about their process of prioritizing. Mrs. Bell asked if what the Facilities Committee is going to be doing is short term and not long term. She said someone has to address the \$200,000+ that is in the budget now. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is gearing up for next year's budget. Superintendent Dr. Villar said hopefully they can make progress.

### **3. AUDIT REPORTS**

Interim Finance Director Connolly said he was told that the Finance Committee gets the audit. Mrs. Bell said the whole Board of Education gets the audit. Interim Finance Director Connolly passed out a copy of the annual audit. He asked them if they also get the state single audit report. He said everything looks good overall. They get a good flavor for the town's finances as to what is going on and where the money has been spent.

Next year in the audit, there will be the recording of the GASB 45. The Town Council has to adopt a resolution by June 30, 2009 that sets up the procedures with regards to handling GASB 45 recording. This will cover the town and the Board of Education.

### **4. BUDGET LINE ITEMS FORMAT**

Interim Finance Director Connolly explained about the budget line items format. A discussion took place.

### **5. UPDATE ON LEGAL EXPENSES**

Interim Finance Director Connolly passed out a copy of the legal expenses and where they are. This is off of the computer and it shows how much has been paid for legal services each month. This item is going over in the budget and the current budget is under budgeted due to the fact that there were all of the negotiations this year for the teachers' contract as well as a couple of other contracts. Mrs. Bell asked Interim Finance Director Connolly if he could separate out what is contract negotiation from "other". Interim Finance Director Connolly said they could do this. He referred to what he had just passed out to them and he told them that they will notice there is an arbitrator in there. This is tied in with the cost for teacher negotiations. Half of the bill is spent by the Teachers Association and half is spent by the Board of Education.

Chairman Rivard asked if they have any idea as to what they can anticipate for legal expenses to the end of the year. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Special Education is a huge wild card. Shipman & Goodwin has rates depending on what level of Attorney is used. He gave more detail about this. Chairman Rivard referred to the bill that comes in for the Attorneys' hours. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is itemized and he reviews this. Mrs. Bell asked if they journal what time they call them to match this up. Superintendent Dr. Villar said he doesn't but he reads through it to make sure it is legitimate. Chairman Rivard asked if there is a flat fee for the evening or if it is an hourly rate when they meet in roundtable to discuss issues. Superintendent Dr. Villar thinks they break this down to fifteen minute intervals.

### **6. UPDATE ON TRAINER EXPENSES**

Interim Finance Director Connolly handed out a copy to everyone of the expenses to date for the Athletic Trainer services for the current fiscal year. Interim Finance Director Connolly said this is the

end of the payments now for this fiscal year. Three payments were made. Mrs. Bell asked if the Athletic Trainer hasn't billed the Board of Education on an hourly rate and Interim Finance Director Connolly said no. The contract was set up for \$40,500 to be billed in three payments. This is based on twenty-five hours per week for twelve weeks per season at \$45 per athletic training hour which equals \$13,500 per season.

Mrs. Bell asked how they know they are getting the hours. Superintendent Dr. Villar was sure that Mr. Tom McCabe could speak to this. Mr. McCabe will be speaking at the next regular Board of Education meeting with regards to winter sports. Superintendent Dr. Villar understood there is a schedule of hours when the Athletic Trainer is available. He told Mrs. Bell that he thinks her question should be directed to Mr. McCabe. Mrs. Bell said she wasn't questioning his ability to do this as long as it gets done. She asked if they have some accountability for what they have contracted for. Superintendent Dr. Villar was almost certain, according to the last report that Mr. McCabe gave, that the Athletic Trainer works certain days at certain times where the students can access him. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Mr. McCabe can be asked this again in order to clarify it.

Chairman Rivard said they budgeted \$20,000 for this and \$40,000 was paid out so they are \$20,000 over. He asked if this was because they budgeted \$20,000 pre-contract. Superintendent Dr. Villar said yes. The budget was done last May and the bid didn't happen until August.

Interim Finance Director Connolly has heard that these services are good and that people like what is going on. The RFP (Request for Proposals) was set up so they have the option for two additional one year renewals if they chose to stay with this company. Mrs. Bell asked if it would be at the same price. Interim Finance Director Connolly said it would be at an agreed upon rate of compensation. Superintendent Dr. Villar said no kind of discussion on this has been entertained. Mrs. Bell asked what kind of contract this is. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they would have to contact this vendor if they are interested in continuing with them to tell them that and to ask them what they can do for this district next year. They would have to then work out and agree upon what the rate would be and reenter a contract. They didn't want to do anything without talking with the Board of Education first.

Mrs. Bell asked if lacrosse will have any effect on this. Superintendent Dr. Villar said Mr. McCabe didn't seem to think so. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is something to monitor because it is a lot more children and it may impact the vendor's position. Mrs. Bell said if the vendor comes back with an increased amount then she would want to break out lacrosse because part of the deal with the Board of Education was no new cost for this. She hoped they would have an amount at least that they could pass on to the Booster Club.

## **7. CABE POLICY UPDATE COSTS**

Superintendent Dr. Villar said this item went to the Policy Committee. They don't have an invoice from CABE on this and they had only provided the Board of Education with an estimate which is \$3,000 per year on their policy service. Over four years, this would be an estimated cost of \$12,000. There would be a fully updated policy that is electronic in format which can be maintained online. CABE offers this service. For this current year, \$1,500 is budgeted for services so the process can begin. CABE is very flexible in their billing and very Board of Education friendly.

Chairman Rivard asked if this is for three years. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it is really for four years altogether. As far as expense goes, one of the issues he sees is that this district has some really significantly old policies. This year, they have had some significant policy changes. A lot more mandated things need to happen.

Chairman Rivard asked if CAFE is going to go through each item in the policies to make sure they meet state regulations. Superintendent Dr. Villar said the \$3,000 per year will get them at the end of this process. This district will get a whole new policy manual that is maintained in electronic format. One of the situations that exists now is there is a de-synchronization of policy manuals. This can be hosted online on this district's web service and people can access it. Everyone would be accessing the same file and there would be an up-to-date format. The other service that might be considered when this is all done is that CAFE can maintain this. There is a fee associated with it but it might be worth it to entertain this cost. He said the Policy Committee wants to see this go forward.

Chairman Rivard asked if this has to be voted on. Superintendent Dr. Villar thinks they will need authorization for the expenditure. He said they will probably have to allocate more funds possibly. There may be a shift in funds to get this going towards the end of this year. He hasn't asked CAFE to send an invoice at this point but he would like to start moving forward with it. There are only a few guys who do this.

Chairman Rivard asked Superintendent Dr. Villar if he is looking for them as an endorsement of the Policy Committee. Superintendent Dr. Villar said these are professional services which are under \$4,000 annually. He wants to see if there is a consensus. He believes there is a consensus of the Policy Committee and there is probably one of the Finance Committee. He is not convinced that Board of Education action is needed but he wanted to inform them. There was a question of cost that had come up.

Mrs. Bell told Superintendent Dr. Villar that he had mentioned this was a four year commitment. Mrs. Bell told Superintendent Dr. Villar that he can intend to go forward for four years but she didn't think the Board of Education could make a four year budget commitment. It has to be annual. Mrs. Bell said her other issue was prioritization and she asked if CAFE goes from Policy # 101, #102, etc. or if they go in some kind of order that is meaningful to this Board of Education. Superintendent Dr. Villar said that was a good question. CAFE will work with the Board of Education to pick which policies they want to start with. CAFE also will purposely do this in chunks. The Board of Education wouldn't be committed to having to continue this for four years. In his estimation, this would be really good money spent for the Board of Education and it would be advisable. The impact of having a policy that is not up-to-date could cost them money at some point.

Mrs. Bell asked if CAFE looks to make sure that the policy is consistent with language in the student handbooks. Superintendent Dr. Villar said this is something the Board of Education has to do. They are working on this now. He has pulled in the handbooks from all of the principals to make sure that the elementary schools all have the same language. The Bully Policy has to be updated in there.

Mrs. Bell referred to a situation where she had been deposed for a lawsuit a number of years ago. This hinged on the meaning of supervision as it was stated in the student handbook. To her, supervision at the elementary level is far different from supervision at the high school level.

Superintendent Dr. Villar said they have to cross check the annual notifications from Shipman & Goodwin against what they have out there. It is a great place to start by having a core policy. Without a significant focus on this, he fears over time that it is hard to keep this maintained.

Chairman Rivard asked if they are members of CAFE now or if this is for the upcoming budget. Superintendent Dr. Villar said they are members now and it is in the budget to continue this. He has accessed their services this year by attending different workshops with them. This would be a rate that depends on the membership as well.

Interim Finance Director Connolly said Stonington uses CAFE. He was amazed at how many times during the year they would get new policies from CAFE to change with the times changing. CAFE kept the Board of Education up-to-date on the latest Court cases, etc. It was very helpful.

Chairman Rivard said this becomes a searchable document just because of the fact they can go electronic. Superintendent Dr. Villar said it is great and this would be very helpful. This item was brought for discussion this evening because there was a question of the cost. They want to make sure everyone understands this.

Chairman Rivard asked if there was any other business. There was none.

**Moved by Maria Menella, seconded by Catherine Vargas, to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.**

**FAVOR: ALL  
MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,

Jo-Anne Booth  
Recording Secretary

Accepted by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_