

**NORWALK BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PERSONNEL AND NEGOTIATIONS COMMITTEE  
MARCH 8, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Michael Lyons, Chairman; Michael Barbis, Bryan Meek;  
Attorney Thomas Mooney  
STAFF: Board of Education: Dr. Steven Adamowski, Superintendent;  
Frank Costanzo, Chief of Operations;  
OTHER Bruce Morris; David Hopp, President, ESG Union; Paul Stringer, CFSA

*\*It is noted that minutes are not verbatim and represent summarizations of comments made.*

Call to Order

Mr. Lyons called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and introduced Board of Education committee members and administrators with Norwalk Public Schools in attendance as listed above.

Agenda:

Board Level Grievance Hearing under Executive Service Group Contract

Mr. Lyons announced that this would be an appeal hearing on a grievance on behalf of Executive Service Group and he outlined the rules of the proceedings. He explained this would be an open session as opposed to a formal court hearing with parties having an opportunity to present the case, submit any documents or evidence and ask questions. It was noted that members of the public present would be permitted to speak on behalf of the claimant if requested.

*\*It is noted that the proceedings were held in open public session as requested by the claimant of the grievance.*

Mr. Lyons noted that following a review of documents and verbal statements, the Committee would render a decision within fourteen (14) days from the date of the hearing.

Mr. Morris referred to a letter he received and stated that it was without due process or verbal discussion or communication. He explained the letter represented a written reprimand he received from Frank Costanzo and subsequently revised by Dr. Adamowski. He highlighted excerpts of the letter and noted there were discrepancies or untruths as to the events as reported.

Mr. Morris reviewed the situation where student's parents came to Central Office to meet with him to appeal their child's 10-day suspension, and the Superintendent's secretary claimed she could not locate him. He outlined that he was not able to hear the appeal as he was the Hearing Office and Mr. Costanzo would be the Appeal Officer.

Mr. Morris then provided his recollection of the circumstances that occurred, and the practices of how he provides ways he can be reached when out of the office by forwarding his office number to his personal cell phone. Mr. Morris highlighted that there was no written communication protocol provided as policy or guideline to follow for an out of the office contact procedure. He acknowledged that he had not left notice with the office of where he was going on the date in question, but he added that there was no ill-intent, he was reachable by phone, and the reprimand was unnecessary. He stated that this grievance could have been avoided with a verbal conversation.

Dr. Adamowski said part of his due diligence at a Level 2 hearing was to read the ESG contract, and noted it did not include reprimands or warnings, it dealt with discipline. He explained that the issue is a procedural matter where support personnel are required to inform the executive secretary or assistant when leaving the office during regular business hours, and to provide a location destination, the reason for leaving, an estimated time of return, and how they can be reached by phone, email or text.

There were comments and clarifications made by David Hopp, president of ESG; and Paul Stringer, Vice President, Connecticut Federation of School Administrators. Mr. Stringer explained that a progressive discipline letter was served without verbal warning and constituted harsh and unnecessary treatment of an employee with 17 year tenure.

Mr. Lyons referred to the union contract with Executive Support Group (ESG 1125) and read the definition of what constitutes an offense that would constitute a grievance. He asked how the claimant reacted to the contract provision stating that grievances did not include written or verbal warnings. Mr. Stronger replied that the claimant felt that due process should be followed and the warning letter was excessive.

Mr. Lyons stated that the Negotiations and Personnel Committee will review the documents and statements in greater detail and will render a decision 14 days after this hearing.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Marilyn Knox,  
Telesco Secretarial Services