

January 18, 2005

1. Cullen & Associates letter of Agreement

Chairman Floyd stated this item relates to the efforts that the Village and the related communities are going to have regarding the school district disconnection evaluation. He noted the first letter of agreement is for hiring the firm of Cullen & Associates, to provide legislative support of our efforts. Tom Cullen has over 15 years experience working in the General Assembly. He has extensive contacts downstate and good relationships we believe will help move whatever effort we come up with along.

Moved by Trustee Floyd
Seconded by Trustee Nolan

That the Village Board approve the Letter of Agreement with Cullen & Associates to provide legislative support for the Village's school disconnection efforts

Discussion: Trustee Arends asked how did we find them. President Melchert responded a number of names were given to us by people who are in the know and respected downstate. This is the individual that we felt best suited for our needs. She noted this is her recommendation and staff's recommendation as well. Administrator Salmons added we interviewed Mr. Cullen, Attorney Mraz and President Melchert were there. She echoed that she thinks he has the kind of connections that we will find most valuable in the next few months as we are going to Springfield and entering into an arena where we don't have a lot of experience. Trustee Kavouris added he supports the recommendation of the Mayor and Staff and will result in some good work being done.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Trustee Airdo, Arends, Floyd, Kavouris and Nolan

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Trustee Bormann

MOTION CARRIED.

2. Dr. Timothy Brown Letter of Agreement

Chairman Floyd stated this agreement with Dr. Timothy Brown is to provide community input and additional legislative support. He noted Dr. Brown is present this evening and called upon him for some comments.

Dr. Brown stated he teaches at Condordia University in River Forest. He noted he has spoken with Village Staff regarding the importance of planning for this disconnection. What interests him a great deal about this project is that it is very consistent with the national trend in education to smaller more community-based districts that have a great deal interconnection between the values and the ideals of the district, the population of that district and how that district operates, how that district identifies its purpose and connects with the dreams and the values of the community. While the legislative effort for this disconnection is going about, we envision a concomitant planning on the part of

the community for this to take place. Dr. Brown added you have gotten a very positive response from your community about a disconnected school district of a much smaller size than you have been accustomed to. This referendum was a fairly general statement about education and about financing. What the Village could expect of him is facilitating a process that would be more specific about exactly what do these general statements mean and how are they understood by the members of the community and what do they expect right from the get go, where is this new school district and how do they expect it to operate and how do they expect to hold it accountable for that operation. He sees his role strictly as a facilitator to encourage the work of the community itself and not to be dependent upon him but to be independent of him in as short as time as possible.

President Melchert added in Dr. Brown's proposal is Michael Frances who would be providing some services relating to school finances. Given the fact that Kathy Booth has done a lot of work here relative to school finances, this would be someone that would be able to guide her in any future activities that she might find herself relative to the financing of a new school district or the disconnection costs. Trustee Floyd asked if he would serve as a facilitator or other.

President Melchert responded he would be looking at the numbers, not facilitating. Administrator Salmons added one of the things that we wanted to do was take the numbers and the updated study that we had done in the fall and make sure that our assumptions are sound and that the school finance law hasn't changed significantly since the last time we looked at it. Also to have someone look those numbers over and as you know we are also redoing looking at the numbers and the impact on the rest of the district. We have a number of issues relative to the financial structure of the new district and we need someone who really understands school finance to take a look at our project and help us out.

Trustee Airdo added these two gentlemen have come before the Board for the first time and he noted this is the first time we have discussed since the referendum in November the actions that the Village was going to take in response to that referendum question. He thinks it is probably important, Trustee Arends hinted at this earlier, maybe for the public's perspective if Mayor or Administrator Salmons would bring us up to date as to what has happened since the referendum and what our projected course is going to be. It is important to communicate that as much we need to to the community. Trustee Arends wanted to know what the plan for the committee, whose is on the committee, how is that selection going to take place.

Administrator Salmons responded it was her understanding the committee was referred to as any group of residents who would be coming. We would probably start with the group of residents who have been active to date, but certainly there is no appointment, no membership on the committee. Dr. Brown was looking for a core group of residents in our community to begin to work with.

President Melchert asked Administrator Salmons to speak to the steps that have been taken over the past months in getting this ready to get to this particular point. As you

see here before you this evening, not only the agreement with Mr. Cullen, also the agreement with Dr. Brown, is a two-prong approach.

Administrator Salmons noted after the referendum we spent the first month primarily focusing on some of the underlying legal issues we knew confronted this organization in terms of moving forward, what kinds of funds we spent and how we spent them. As you know we believe we have moved forward to clarify that issue. The second thing we did and we have done repeatedly is to talk to our State Senators and our Representatives to make sure that we are clear on what they are looking at, that they understood the numbers from the referendum. We have talked to them repeatedly about what their ideas are in terms of how we would break away. We have met with the citizens group twice to talk about what their issues are. They wanted to know what we have been doing and we told them we have been looking at some kind of legislation. She added as you know, a year ago, Klein Thorpe drafted legislation for us to consider, that we felt would clarify the state law that provides for the break away of one section of the school district from another. We have asked Klein Thorpe to re-look at that legislation, they have done that and they are finishing up a final draft of the kinds of legislation that we would bring to Springfield this session to begin to clarify some of the issues before we actually start the real process, a group of residents goes to the Regional School Superintendent, that is later down the line after we clarify some of these issues.

President Melchert added along with that, Dr. Brown's activities speak very well to the concerns of people in the past while the referendum was in question and what happens with the new district, what does it look like and Dr. Brown will be facilitating those meetings. That would give the residents of the affected communities a chance to state what their needs and desires are for a new school district. Not just a separate school district but a new school district. She thinks that is probably one of the most exciting things that will be happening is that we will get a chance to see what a different school district could look like and could be for the residents for this section of the old U-46 district.

Trustee Kavouris asked if it would be prudent to discuss having a formal committee, or if Dr. Brown wants to talk about, opposed to just some kind of gathering of people that have a formal committee of core people, or if anyone else could join in. Is that something we should think about?

Dr. Brown responded his advice to you would be to wait. The reason, as was just mentioned, it is very important for the community to be involved as a whole in this initial information gathering. Then in the course of that information gathering, probably people will identify themselves that are willing to spend the time to actually do the more time intensive planning. But if you do that too quickly, then it becomes an opportunity for the rest of the community to kind of sit back and wait for them to do something, whereas this involves the whole community and really helps that visioning process be community wide and not just a small portion. He does not think you have to wait a long time, but maybe one series of meetings. He would suggest a series of town meetings be held mostly to listen, and to be real directive about that listening in terms of being responsive to what is said, communicate to everyone who was there and what was said,

communicate to the larger community and then come back with some refinement of what was heard in those committees and then at that time you will need a coordinate.

Trustee Kavouris clarified who will run those meetings.

Dr. Brown responded he will facilitate those meetings, the more the community can do for itself is better. He can ask questions, he can encourage things to get done, he will not be the one doing them.

Trustee Floyd asked where will Michael Frances fit in. We have a letter of agreement for the two of them?

Administrator Salmons responded one letter of agreement covers both of them.

Moved by Trustee Floyd

Seconded by Trustee Arends

That the Village Board approve the Letter of Agreement with Dr. Timothy Brown and Mr. Michael Frances to provide community input and legislative support for the Village's school district disconnection efforts

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Trustee Airdo, Arends, Floyd, Kavouris and Nolan

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Trustee Bormann

MOTION CARRIED.