

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, July 10, 2012, at 7:30 p.m. in the board room at 3 Primrose Street.

D. Leidlein, Chair	J. Robinson
L. Roche, Vice Chair	L. Gejda
C. McCubbin, Secretary)	R. Bienkowski
R. Gaines	1 Staff
W. Hart (absent)	16 Public
K. Alexander	3 Press
J. Vouros	

Mrs. Leidlein called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

Item 1 – Consent Agenda

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to approve the minutes of June 19, 2012. Mrs. Roche seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

MOTION: Mrs. Roche moved to approve the minutes of July 28, 2012. Mr. Alexander seconded. Vote: 4 ayes, 2 abstained (Mr. McCubbin, Mr. Gaines)

MOTION: Mr. Alexander moved to approve the remainder of the consent agenda which included the donation of a bench for Newtown High School from the Class of 1962, the child rearing leave of absence for Mary Blair, teacher at Middle Gate School, and the Newtown High School fall 2012 coaches. Mr. Vouros seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

Item 2 – Public Participation

Kevin Fitzgerald, 24 old Farm Hill Road, addressed a letter from Mrs. Leidlein that was in the *Bee* regarding the budget.

Mrs. Leidlein stated that because the budget was not on the agenda this item would have to wait until the second public participation.

Michelle Assante, Wendover Road, asked to have more clarification on budget information.

Item 3 – Reports

Correspondence: Mr. McCubbin listed 55 emails by subject. There were 5 against the change in Hawley start times, 8 general questions about the budget or budget process, 22 supporting adding back budget cuts, 9 want a zero increase in the budget, and 11 were miscellaneous issues.

Chair Report: Mrs. Leidlein removed the budget discussion from the agenda because Mr. Bienkowski was unable to attend the meeting and would have been needed to answer any questions. Our areas of reduction have been identified but we can't make any further decisions until we have the budget number. An email went out today which caused some confusion regarding a document that was distributed at a meeting earlier in the budget season. The question was in regard to a document distributed June 14, 2012 titled Board of Education Same Services Budget Recap. The top of the document shows how the Board went from the same services budget to the Board proposed

budget. We took out the items no longer needed and put items in that were needed to get to the same services budget. The information we presented was correct. She has been participating with Pat Llodra in her meetings with the community members regarding our budgets.

A member of the public asked about former owner/operators that took positions with All Star. As of the last meeting with them, Ed Bryan who is a Newtown resident was hired as manager of the operations at the terminal. Joan Baumgartner, who also drove in Newtown, was hired as a dispatcher. Eleven drivers are former owner/operators and 90% of the drivers are Newtown residents.

Superintendent's Report:

Dr. Robinson said a number of surveys are mandated by the state. We are now required to conduct climate surveys as part of the Safe School Climate Plan. The three student surveys are early elementary, upper elementary/middle, and middle/high school. The results of the surveys show areas of remediation which may contribute to revising the Safe School Climate Plan. There are also colleague, student and parent surveys as part of the teacher evaluation plan.

Dr. Robinson encouraged the Board members to attend the CABE/CAPSS convention in November as it's a great learning experience. She provided an update on the summer maintenance program in the schools. Improvements have been greatly reduced. OSHA training is also required yearly. She will make a school tour the week before they open. It's difficult that we can't make decisions yet. She met with elementary principals today who are also very concerned.

Mrs. Roche asked for clarification regarding moving the pre-K classes from Head O'Meadow School.

Dr. Robinson said the Sandy Hook and Hawley students will be at Sandy Hook School. The Head O'Meadow and Middle Gate students will be at Head O'Meadow School. The equipment for physical therapy is at Head O'Meadow. There is more room at Sandy Hook School and if we have a full day kindergarten program we need the extra room at Head O'Meadow.

NICE Quarterly Report:

Jason Hiruo highlighted the students, community, program and educators involved in the NICE program. 26 students applied for the China 2013 study tour, 75 for the France 2013 study tour and 23 students applied for the 2013 International Forum in Japan. David Swigart and Kyra Middleler were the first extended-stay study abroad students from Newtown. They were there a month and stayed with multiple families.

We are expecting to offer 20 community workshops in the areas of language, arts, dance, and film. We are also seeking host families for the additional teacher. The family we have now is not taking the stipend and asked to have it put back into the program.

We formalized our program in France and Japan and we hope to have our partnerships in Spain and Italy formalized as early as November. France offered to have us visit in April. We expect to have educator study teams from Japan, France and Shanghai in October. NICE was selected by the state department as a supportive resource and professional liaison to/for visiting educators and delegations from Europe and Asia this summer.

Amy Repay is the third Newtown educator participating in the U.S. National Japan study team in two years. Tim DeJulio is the first educator in the Newtown-Liaocheng Fellowship to teach abroad.

Mr. Vouros asked who paid for the substitute for Tim DeJulio.

Mr. Hiruo said we paid for the substitute and had someone with his qualifications to be able to teach his courses. We will also have two new guest teachers in August for the high school and Reed School.

Mr. Vouros asked what the guest teacher would be doing.

Mr. Hiruo said that person is a teacher in training. The focus is to provide opportunities to share culture and language with community. That teacher would be assigned to each team. Also, Sandy Hook School staff will be going to Shanghai in April to formalize their partnership.

Dr. Robinson stated the teams pay their own way and will be traveling during the April break.

Mrs. Roche questioned why there was only a team from Sandy Hook School.

Mr. Hiruo said they expressed the most interest but it was open to all staff.

Mr. Vouros wanted to be sure that student involvement was monitored to be sure class time was not infringed upon. He also feels other elementary schools should have the same opportunity.

Mr. Hiruo said we offer this to all of the schools.

Dr. Robinson stated that Sandy Hook School received a grant to fund their before-school learning.

Item 4 – New Business

Blum Shapiro Feasibility Study:

Jeff Ziplow and Domenic Barone of Blum Shapiro provided an overview of the project.

Mr. Ziplow began by stating they were engaged to do an operational assessment between the town and the school district.

They looked at finance, human resources, information technology and building management and interviewed 29 employees. The town and school district have separate financial management and payroll systems which create inefficiencies. There are opportunities for improvement on both sides. Information Technology and the town are working together and the maintenance departments are working collaboratively.

Mr. Ziplow spoke about the 4 phases of the implementation plan. They recommend utilizing current employees in a new structure and bringing them together by merging human resources and payroll personnel. Hiring of teachers will remain with the school district and those involved in hiring will remain in those roles. They also recommend merging the town and school district's facilities and maintenance department with Mr. Faiella coordinating these efforts. Finally, the accounting operations for each group will also be merged. Implementing these recommendations over a five-year period will see a savings of between \$400,000 and \$500,000. The implementation would begin with human resources and payroll taking up to 6 months, merging of the maintenance departments would take 7 to 12 months, merging Information Technology from 7 to 12 months, and 12 to 24 months to consolidate accounting operations.

Mr. Alexander had questions about the cost divisions being shared and decisions for things such as annual reviews.

Mr. Ziplow said they would work with the chief financial office and both would evaluate them and be part of the hiring process.

Mr. Alexander asked about cost sharing.

Mr. Ziplow stated that Bob Tait and Ron Bienkowski had discussions and are comfortable with that process. The first change is human resources and payroll.

Mr. Alexander feels we would have to discuss how the costs will be shared by each side such as salary.

Mr. Gaines asked, looking at the implementation phases, when phase 1 would begin since we have no budget now.

Mr. Ziplow said this plan needs to be approved by a number of people. The First Selectman and Superintendent have bought into this. Other issues need to be addressed. A new payroll system would start in January.

Mr. Vouros confirmed that all employees would stay in place on each side when this begins. Mr. Ziplow said that was correct. There will be some loss of positions through retirements or when a position becomes vacant. There is no loss in phase one.

Dr. Robinson said regarding this process, the law provides for the separateness of the school system. Any change has to have Board of Education approval. We concluded that phase one was the most viable to see how this will work. A stumbling block is the budget. The cost of \$33,000 for ADP would be saved but the town needs to purchase the Phoenix module. The Board would approve one phase at a time and get the information needed to see the costs before implementing. All elements need to be fully vetted by the Board of Education. We are also looking at employees in different unions which would have to be negotiated. We agreed that phase one would have the fewest obstacles.

Mr. Alexander asked about the approval process.

Dr. Robinson stated that the Legislative Council wants to attend the next Board meeting to discuss this.

Mrs. Roche asked if there would be training for these changes.

Mr. Ziplow said there would be training but it's helpful that we already have people using Phoenix and can take advantage of their skill sets.

Mr. McCubbin asked how it would affect contracts if we consolidated services.

Mr. Ziplow said we tried to compare positions on both sides to see if they are paid in a comparable way. There's no significant difference comparing like positions on both sides.

Mr. Gaines asked how long the interview process took.

Mr. Ziplow responded 6 to 8 weeks.

Mr. Gaines asked if they validated the interviews with Dr. Robinson, Mrs. Llodra and Mr. Faiella.

Mr. Ziplow stated they reviewed their findings.

Mrs. Leidlein was concerned about the longevity of the Phoenix system and if it was the best way to go or was there a better system which would allow more efficiencies combining the groups.

Mr. Ziplow said they need to validate Phoenix for the town.

Mrs. Leidlein felt that prior to the town investing money it would be more advantageous to have a system that would accommodate what the town needs.

Mr. Ziplow said the Phoenix System was popular with school systems but we haven't seen it pushed that much over the last 3 years. We need to validate the longevity of that software. A better course of action would be to see what Phoenix is. A new system would need training for both groups. Our concern is if it will work for the town. We wanted to raise awareness that the long term commitment by the vendor to Phoenix is questionable.

Item 5 – New Business

Fuel Oil Bid Waiver:

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved that the Board of Education waive Policy 3-300 Purchasing – Bids, Quotations, Proposals as it pertains to the purchase of fuel oil for the school year 2013-2014. Such waiver is granted in consideration of the volatile fuel oil market and recognizing that other communities and school districts will be and are locking into a fixed price for next year based on their best judgment of the market when it seems right. The waiver will allow the Director of Business and the Director of Facilities, with the approval of the Superintendent of Schools, to exercise an option to solicit written, verbal, or fax quotes for supply and give them the ability to commit to a supplier based on their best opinion of market conditions. Whenever an agreement is reached, it will be presented to the Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting and shall not exceed one year in duration. Mr. McCubbin seconded.

Dr. Robinson said this is a 40-town consortium. We would like to join and move forward when they have the best market price for the 2013-2014 school year.

Mr. McCubbin asked who made the decision to lock in the price.

Dr. Robinson said one of our interim business managers is involved and when they get a majority vote they act on it. There is also an option to not go in if we think we can get a lower price.

Vote: 6 ayes

Item 6 – Public Participation

Kinga Walsh, 21 Horseshoe Ridge Road, was confused on how the budget was going to work. There is still concern in town whether we will have a full day kindergarten program. Why hasn't the Board voted on it? We don't know what we are voting for.

Mrs. Leidlein said Mr. Bienkowski stated publicly, as has she, that the information we provided was accurate. A lot of misinformation is being stated. We can't vote on full day kindergarten until the budget is passed.

Mrs. Walsh said people are still not clear. There is no Board statement saying there is a \$120,000 or \$80,000 shortfall if the Board has not agreed on this. There is not a great deal of trust that the numbers will work. She would like to sit with Mrs. Leidlein to have a better understanding.

Robin Fitzgerald, 24 Old Farm Hill Road, said the public doesn't trust what is being said. She doesn't believe you are going to deliver a same service budget. Things in the past have been cut and never came back. We had a \$1.7M reduction from the budget so how can the same services be provided? We are \$200,000 in the hole when we start next year.

Mrs. Leidlein said after the Board of Education put forth the budget there were other areas of savings found.

Mrs. Fitzgerald doesn't understand increased class sizes. Why was the budget brought forward called same services?

Mrs. Leidlein said we stated that we would watch areas going forward. There is no reduction of staffing except for the Middle Gate positions reduced due to enrollment. We are projected to be down 89 students for next year.

Kevin Fitzgerald, 24 Old Farm Hill Road, said Mrs. Leidlein promised an open discussion on the budget but took the topic off the agenda. There is an effort just to get the budget passed. He referred to her letter in the *Bee*. There was a promise of new programs. He'd like to know what they are. We could have had the discussion without the finance director.

MOTION: Mr. Alexander moved to adjourn. Mr. McCubbin seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

Item 7 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Cody McCubbin
Secretary

Students:

1. 26 Students selected for China 2013 Study Tour
2. 75 Students have applied for France 2013 Study Tour
3. 23 Students have applied for 2013 International Forum in Japan. Deadline for Japan application is September 2012.
4. NICE Received \$1,100.00 of Financial Need Scholarship funding from the PTA and community contributions
5. David Swigart and Kyra Middleleer became the first extended-stay study abroad students from Newtown
6. Junior Ambassador programs to begin at RIS, NMS - Fall 2012

Community:

1. 2011-2012: 15 Learning Workshops and Forums offered to Community and District
2. Seeking Host families for our guest teachers
3. NICE will participate in *The Newtown Arts Festival* on September 15 & 16 to provide learning opportunities and introductory language workshops for all ages
4. NICE PCO obtains 5013C Status and incorporation

Program:

1. Sister School Partnerships Formalized in France and Japan
2. Partnerships in Spain and Italy may formalize as early as November
3. Successful first year completion of The Hindi Language and Cultural Classes: 17 students (Mrs. Barman)
4. NICE will welcome educator study teams from Japan, France and Shanghai in October. Each study team consists of four to five educators responsible for international education in their schools or cities. The study teams are all from current sister schools and will work with Newtown educators to develop learning opportunities and virtual projects for students.
5. NICE selected by state department as supportive resource and professional liaison to\for visiting educators and delegations from Europe and Asia Summer 2012

Educators:

1. NHS Social Studies teacher, Amy Repay becomes the third Newtown educator selected to the US National Japan Study team in two years.
2. NHS Science Teacher Tim DeJulio becomes the first educator in the *Newtown-Liaocheng Fellowship* to teach abroad
3. Teachers and classrooms throughout the district will have the opportunity this next school year to participate in pen pals and classroom-to-classroom projects in Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Languages with our sister schools.
4. We welcome two new guest teachers in August (NHS, RIS)
5. Sandy Hook Elementary will send a team of eight educators to Shanghai in April 2013 to formalize their partnership and collaborate on school-to-school projects. This team will share their ongoing work with the BOE and later present their work and impact at a school-wide level.

Presentation For:

The Town and School District of Newtown

Municipal and School District Operations Feasibility Study

July 10, 2012

BlumShapiro

Accounting | Tax | Business Consulting

The passion to unlock potential

AGENDA

- I. Project Overview
- II. Key Findings
- III. Recommendations
- IV. Implementation

BlumShapiro

Accounting | Tax | Business Consulting

I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

- A. Project goals and objectives:
 - 1. Analyze existing operations for selected areas of the Town and School District
 - a) Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology, Building Management
 - 2. Evaluate current positions, roles and responsibilities
 - 3. Evaluate how departments interact internally and externally
 - 4. Develop an operational framework for both the Town and School District
 - 5. Develop an implementation plan for recommendations
 - 6. Document workflows (“as-is”) and design streamlined process maps (“to-be”)
- B. The BlumShapiro Project Team interviewed personnel from the selected Town and School District departments/functional areas:
 - 1. At total of 29 (twenty-nine) individuals were interviewed
 - 2. Town Manager and Superintendent
 - 3. Town/BOE Finance, Human Resources, IT, Building Management
 - 4. Selected members of the elected boards : Board of Education, Board of Finance, Legislative Council

BlumShapiro

Accounting | Tax | Business Consulting

II. KEY FINDINGS

A. Financial and Human Resources Operations

1. Town and School District have separate financial management and payroll systems
 - a) Town-MUNIS, ADP (Payroll) and the School District-SunGard Phoenix System
 - b) Inhibits ability to share services and/or information; causes inefficiencies and duplication of work
2. The Town's payroll system is not integrated with the general ledger system
3. Neither the Town or School District are using their systems to the fullest capabilities
 - a) Separate financial systems between the Town and School District inherently creates inefficiencies
 - b) Town - requires manual interface to G/L; limited ability to create what-if scenarios
 - c) School – Has integrated modules but maintains duplicate information

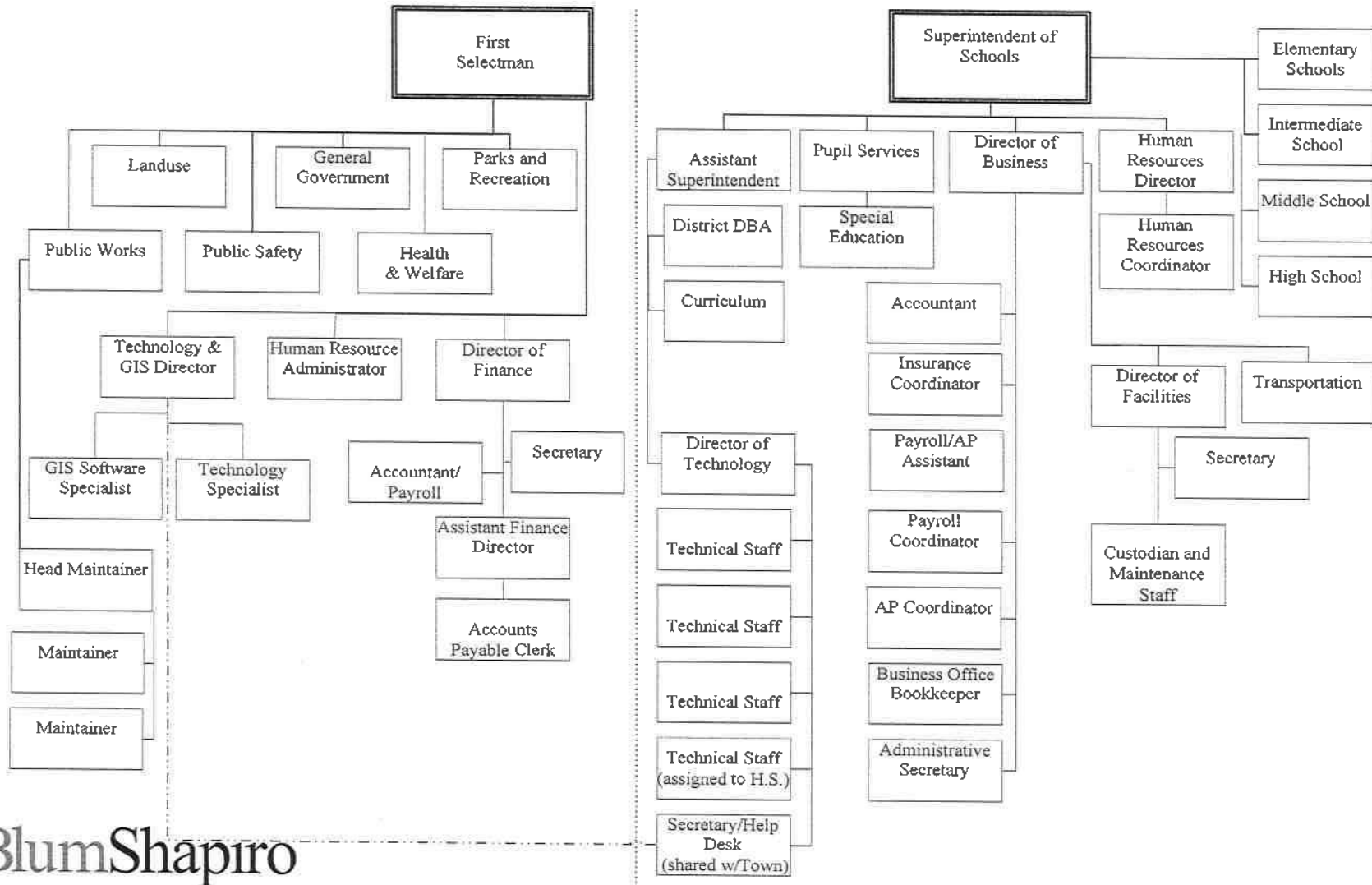
B. Information Technology Operations

1. Currently sharing resources informally

C. Facilities and Maintenance

1. Town's Building Maintenance and School District collaborate on a limited, informal basis

II. FINDINGS-ORGANIZATIONAL CHART-CURRENT



BlumShapiro

Accounting | Tax | Business Consulting

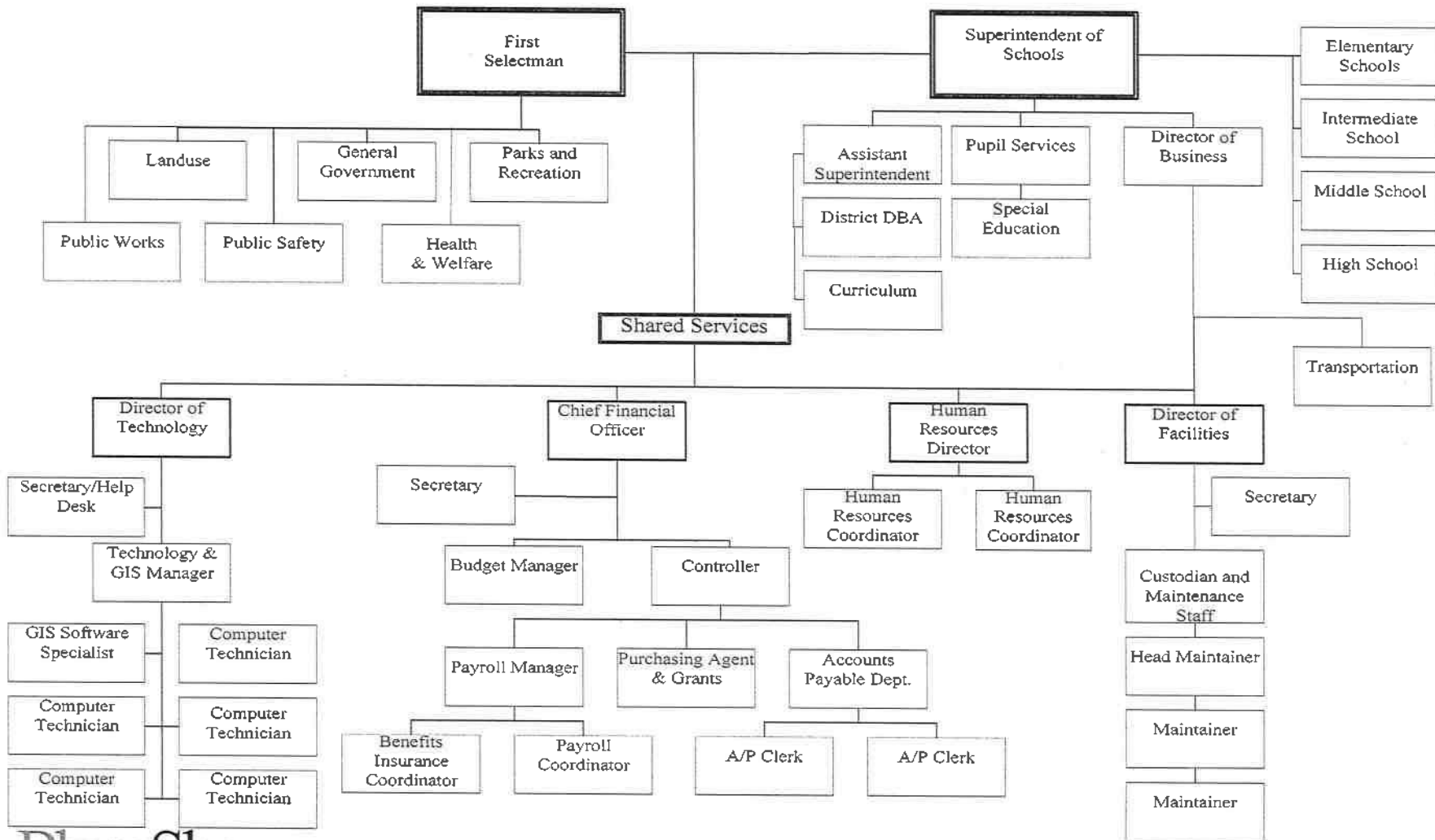
III. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Implement a Shared Services Model for the Town and School District
 1. Use a transitional approach to phase into a new organizational structure
 2. Utilize current employees in new structure
 - a) Provides institutional knowledge of both organizations
 - b) Provides stabilization
 - c) Enables existing employees ability to ensure new organization is a good fit
 3. As employees leave/retire roles may need to be realigned
- B. Phase 1 –Merge Human Resources and Payroll personnel
 1. Formally combine the Town and School District’s Human Resource and Payroll personnel with the Town’s operations
 2. Bring the Town’s payroll processing in-house and utilize a single HR/Payroll solution
 3. Create standard operating procedures (SOP) that address how the HR and Payroll Departments will support and provide services to the Town and School District personnel
- C. Phase 2 -Facilities and Maintenance
 1. Merge the Town Maintainers with the School District’s Facilities and Maintenance Department
 2. Develop SOP and services support agreement between the Town and School District
 3. Continue to leverage joint purchasing opportunities between the Town and School District

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

- D. Phase 3 – Merge the Town’s Information Technology with the School District
 - 1. Formally combine the Town and School District’s IT Departments into a single shared department
 - 2. Create standard operating procedures that address how the department will support and provide services to the Town and School District
 - 3. Create an Information Technology joint committee to oversee the new department
 - 4. Develop fair and equitable cost-sharing for the new IT department
 - 5. Obtain better economies of scale for technology purchases
- E. Phase 4 –Merge School District’s and Town’s Accounting Operations
 - 1. Implement a single, integrated financial management system for the Town and School District
 - a) Perform a formalized software selection process
 - 2. Create standard policies, procedures and protocols that address how the Accounting Department will support and provide services to the Town and School District employees
 - 3. Merge the School District’s Accounting Operations with the Town, creating a centralized operation
 - a) Potential cost savings over 5 years \$400K to \$500K

III. RECOMMENDATIONS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART- SHARED SERVICES MODEL



BlumShapiro

Accounting | Tax | Business Consulting

IV. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Phase 1

- Merge Human Resources and Payroll with Town – 0-6 months
 - Configure Phoenix system's HR and Payroll modules for Town's Use
 - Develop policies and procedures to support combined processes
 - Implement HR and Payroll modules within the Phoenix system

Phase 2

- Merge Town Maintainers with School District – 7-12 months
 - Create Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
 - Develop job descriptions, negotiate with Unions
 - Have 3 Town Maintainers report to Director of Facilities

Phase 3

- Merge Information Technology with School District – 7-12 months
 - Create Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
 - Create new organizational structure
 - Develop equitable cost sharing structure

Phase 4

- Consolidate Accounting Operations – 12-24 months
 - Create new policies, procedures and protocols for accounting operations
 - Co-locate shared accounting management organization
 - Implement single financial software application
 - Implement new financial processes

QUESTIONS



BlumShapiro

Accounting | Tax | Business Consulting