

SOLANO COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT
GOVERNING BOARD

UNADOPTED MINUTES

September 23, 2009

APPENDIX A

5. COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr. Thomas Grube, President of CTA, requested to comment on 9.(a), District Contract with Health Benefits Consultant for 2009-10. Mr. Grube, CTA President, commented as follows:

“I see that once again the contract for Rich Consultants appears on the Governing Board agenda, and once again I can’t resist the opportunity to say, “Rich Consultants, we create plenty of those around here.”

I’ve also noted from Tom Rich’s letter to Dr. Laguerre on pages 9-10 of the Agenda attachments that he mentions reading my comments from an August Board Meeting just before he writes that he will lower his rate from \$225 an hour down to \$200 an hour. I’m hoping that by commenting again we might get an additional 11.1% rate reduction. Of course, the cost savings to the District are reduced if he bills us \$200 per hour for the time it took to drive to and from our campus from Redwood City to meet with Trudy Largent before he prepared this letter. If the Governing Board would like, I’ll continue to complain about the cost of consultants, in the hopes of getting more of our MANY consultants to cut their fees by 11%.

In spring 2008, members of the Health Care Committee were to attend a forum on a Saturday to help them learn more about health care. The faculty members on the committee who were in attendance were Diane White, Susanna Crawford, and Inge Bourden. Sheryl Scott, Cynthia Simon, and Jeff Lehfeltd were also in attendance. From Management, Rich Christensen attended for part of the day. At that meeting, I’m quoting this directly from an e-mail I recently received from Diane White, ‘...we learned that these consultants should be interviewed, and selected by the recommendation of the committee, NOT handpicked by one side (the District). That’s pretty unwise because it doesn’t build the kind of *team consensus* and trust the committee needs in order to get anywhere.’

Now, I’ve met Tom Rich when he held a couple of forums where he explained different health care options to the faculty and told us that HealthNet would give the exact same coverage as Blue Shield for less money. I have nothing against Tom Rich personally. I am concerned when consultant contracts get rolled over without much scrutiny. Trudy Largent came into her position with a lot of items immediately on her plate; this isn’t a knock on her, and I’m not questioning her judgment that under the circumstances she feels it is best to continue with the status quo. I will point out that this consultant was initially hired by Ernesto Fuentes, and has had his contract continually extended. Is anyone asking if we are getting value for our dollar? Is anyone asking if we’d be better served by someone who worked closer to our campus so we weren’t paying for travel time to and from Redwood City, and were at least spending the money in Solano County? Mr. Rich also says in his letter that he is likely to exceed his \$25,000 cap this year. I’m reminded of legal expenses that were routinely three times the budgeted amount. I’m asking that the Board, if they do extend this contract, to make the \$25,000 cap a hard cap requiring further scrutiny and justification of additional expenses as warranted.”