
 YARMUTH WILSDON PLLC

**INVESTIGATIVE REPORT
RE: BELLEVUE HIGH SCHOOL
FOOTBALL PROGRAM**

**Carl
Blackstone**

**Robert
Westinghouse**

On October 15, 2015, we requested that the Booster Club provide us with all documents relating to payments made by the Booster Club to Coach Goncharoff and any BHS assistant coaches. (Exhibit 19 at page 3). We also requested permission to interview John Connors about this subject, among others. On October 30, 2015, the Booster Club notified us that it “will not respond to [our] request for production of documents” and “Mr. Connors has declined to submit to an interview.” (Exhibit 21 at page 3). Coach Goncharoff also refused to answer any questions regarding any payments from the Booster Club or others connected with the Booster Club. Given this lack of cooperation we are comfortable drawing an adverse inference that the Booster Club did in fact pay Coach Goncharoff and other coaches for coaching and that these payments were never approved by the District Board of Directors.

It appears that the District turned a blind eye to these significant payments to coaches. The Booster Club’s tax returns are publicly available and apparently no District or BHS administrator, until very recently, ever reviewed these returns. Then, when a District employee finally reviewed the returns in May 2015, the District decided not to self-report these payments to the KingCo Conference. (See pages 61 to 63 below).

It is also disconcerting that apparently no one in the District has, in the last decade attempted to question Coach Goncharoff in a meaningful way about payments he is receiving. Throughout our investigation, we encountered instances in which individuals relied upon the narrowest possible interpretation of what constituted “payments for coaching.” Thus, if Coach Goncharoff was paid substantial sums by the Booster Club to conduct a one-week junior football camp in the summer, the technically correct, but highly misleading, answer to questions about whether the Booster Club made payments for coaching [“high school football”], might be, “No” because the payments were ostensibly for other coaching.⁷³ Thus, when we asked Lauren McDaniel, the current BHS athletic director, and Scott Powers, BHS principal, if they had ever questioned Coach Goncharoff about payments, they responded that they had only asked Coach Goncharoff if he received any payments other than the BHS stipend for coaching high school football. Because the questioners have chosen not to inquire further, the Booster Club and Coach Goncharoff have been able to perpetuate the sham that he only receives his BHS stipend for coaching high school football. This game of semantics suggests the obvious – all knew what was going on, but did not want to expose the full story. Our efforts to seek clarification from both the Booster Club and from Coach Goncharoff have been rebuffed by their refusals to answer any questions they deem outside the scope of the investigation requested by the District, including questions about payments to coaches.

⁷³ Former BHS Athletic Director Lance Gatter told us that in 2009 or 2010, Coach Goncharoff told him that he was being paid \$50,000 to \$80,000 by the Booster Club to coach a one-week football youth summer camp. Although Mr. Gatter did not provide this information to the Bellevue School Board, he did claim that that he asked WIAA representatives whether these payments were legal and, according to Mr. Gatter, they allegedly agreed. We have been advised by WIAA that the WIAA representatives who Mr. Gatter allegedly talked to had no recollection of this conversation and according to one representative, John Miller, he would have had serious concerns about the legitimacy of these payments because the alleged amounts paid to Coach Goncharoff for coaching a one-week summer camp were not commensurate with the work that he was doing, leading to the inescapable conclusion that Coach Goncharoff was really getting paid to coach the BHS football team.