

Ashford Board of Education
Ashford, Connecticut
Special Meeting Minutes
August 13, 2020
5:30 pm

Electronic Meeting via Zoom (see recording link below)

Chair John Lippert called the special meeting to order at 5:35 pm. Present were Jane Urban, Tess Grous, Tina Fradette, Marian Matthews and Al Maccarone (5:40 pm). Also present was Dr. James Longo, Superintendent, Director of Pupil Personnel Cindy Ford, Principal/Asst. Superintendent Troy Hopkins and Zoom meeting host Scott Waddell. Also present were Kim Kouatly, Meghan Champagne and Meghan Smith who are candidates to be interviewed to fill a vacancy on the board of education.

Opportunity for Public Comment (will be limited)

None

Communications

- Thank you notes were received from Marcella Vertefeuille and Haley Ignatowicz, two of the four Bicknell Scholarship recipients. Both students received \$1,000 scholarships.
- A resignation letter was submitted to the Town Clerk by board member Shannon Gamache.
- The school reopening plan was sent to board members on 7/31 and is available on the school website.

Staff Resignation

Motion made by Jane Urban to regretfully accept the resignation of Krysta Parisen effective July 28, 2020.

Motion seconded by Tina Fradette and carried unanimously.

Tess Grous inquired about having an exit interview with the teacher. Exit interviews may only be held while the teacher is still in the employ of the Board of Education. Jane Urban noted that summer resignations hinder the ability to ask for an employee exit interview. Discussion followed concerning the process of requesting an exit interview. Going forward, the board members will be notified upon receipt of an official resignation.

Staff Appointments (School Business Manager, Special Education Teacher, Classroom Teacher)

- The new business manager, Martha Guidry, will be starting on August 24th. Dr. Longo noted that Karen Munroe will be working with Mrs. Guidry in transition for the next few months. The search committee consisted of Dr. Longo, Karen Munroe, Cheryl Baker and Cindy Ford.

Motion made by Al Maccarone to appoint Martha Guidry to the position of Business Manager effective August 24, 2020. Motion seconded by Tess Grous and carried unanimously.

The board expressed its appreciation to Karen Munroe for staying on in the district much longer than she had anticipated.

- Josie Borysevich was recommended for appointment to the position of special education teacher. Mrs. Ford stated she has confidence in Ms. Borysevich, noting that she had been placed as a long term substitute in a challenging position and she did a great job.

Motion made by Jane Urban to appoint Josie Borysevich to the position of special education teacher.

Motion seconded by Tina Fradette and carried unanimously.

- Mr. Hopkins noted there was a very strong pool of applicants for the position created by the resignation of Mrs. Parisen. The committee followed a rigorous interview process and all agreed that Mr. Carpentier was the best candidate.

Motion made by Al Maccarone to appoint Joshua Carpentier to the position of Grade 5/6 teacher.

Motion seconded by Jane Urban and carried unanimously.

Requests for Leave of Absence

Dr. Longo noted he had received a request for maternity leave from science teacher Dory Moore.

Motion made by Jane Urban to approve a maternity leave of absence for Dory Moore to commence on or about January 21, 2021. Motion seconded by Marian Matthews and carried unanimously.

Dr. Longo received a communication from another teacher who was actually seeking clarification concerning classroom presence for pregnant staff, and is not an actual request for leave. Dr. Longo will follow up with the teacher.

Approval of Temporary Policy Series C-19 (as provided by Counsel)

Board counsel provided a series of policies requiring temporary approval as they have been affected by COVID-19 action and legislation. There was a reminder that counsel provides the board only with policies necessary and legally required for board consideration.

Motion made by Jane Urban to approve temporary policy series C-19 provided by counsel. Motion seconded by Al Maccarone and carried unanimously.

Reschedule Date for Strategic Planning Meeting

The meeting will be rescheduled for Thursday August 20th from 3-6 pm.

Opportunity for Public Comment (will be limited)

None

Next Meeting Date/Agenda Items

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 20th.

Board of Education Vacancy

a. Interview Candidates

Candidates were asked to introduce themselves and were interviewed randomly by drawing names. Candidates responded to questions asked by board members. Candidates were asked to elaborate on their vision for education in Ashford, supporting a board decision when there are differences of opinion amongst members, what do they see as current challenges for Ashford School and the Board of Education and if they had the ability to separate party and political affiliation from what is best for the school and children? Candidates were also asked about their interest level in committees of the board (finance, personnel, transportation, cafeteria, long-term planning and building and grounds)? Candidate opinions were sought about should be done with our building in the future.

b. Move to Non-Meeting to Review Responses

Members moved to a non-meeting entering a private Zoom break out room to discuss candidate responses and will reconvene upon completion of their review.

c. Selection of Member to Fill Board of Education Vacancy

Board secretary Tess Grous spoke upon the board's return to session. She noted that the board had reached a unanimous decision to appoint Kim Kouatly to fill the vacancy on the board of education. She encouraged others to consider running for future board of education seats. She thanked all of the candidates for their interest and members of the board were very impressed with all three candidates.

Request for Release of Unexpended Educational Funds to Board of Finance

Dr. Longo had exited the board meeting prior to board of education candidate interviews to attend the Board of Finance meeting to discuss requests submitted for the release of non-lapsing or unexpended educational funds.

Adjournment

Motion made by Al Maccarone to adjourn the special meeting (7:27 pm) made by Tess Grous and carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Barsaleau, Recording Secretary

Ashford Board of Education Zoom Meeting Link to recording:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/2o9KFlz8sVFOEoHBwkTCU49_FLXaeaa8gCIZ-qAPzUdv8JkHR95ZyPFPO7pNJIKM Password: wU%?k2d5