

Wednesday, January 29, 2020

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held January 29, 2020, at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:44 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon and Hernan Illingworth. Board member Albert Benejan was present.

Tim McNamara, assistant director of human resources, was present.

Mr. Illingworth moved approval of the committee's minutes of July 24, 2019. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and approved by a 1-0 vote. Mr. Weldon was in favor. Mr. Illingworth abstained.

The next agenda item was interviews for the position of the executive director of human resources.

Denise Altro-Dixon was the first candidate. Ms. Altro-Dixon did not request the interview be held in public.

Mr. Illingworth moved "*to go into executive session to interview Candidate Altro-Dixon.*" Invited to participate were committee members Weldon and Illingworth, and Mr. McNamara. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

The executive session began 6:47 p.m.

The committee resumed in public session at 7:23 p.m.

Lisette Colon was the next candidate. Ms. Colon requested the interview be held in public session.

Ms. Colon said she was a product of the Bridgeport Public Schools and recently graduated from the University of Bridgeport specializing in human resources management. She described herself as a self-starter, motivated, committed and passionate.

In response to a question, Ms. Colon described how she has dealt with issues with unions. She said it was about building relationships and being able to negotiate and come to an agreement. She said she has dealt with an incident where it was alleged an employee had a drinking problem and another with regarding falsification of FMLA.

In response to a question, Ms. Colon said she would ensure every job applicant gets the same opportunity by following the process and the procedure. She said proper certifications and credentials are important in hiring certified staff.

Mr. Illingworth said sometimes candidates may be well qualified but based on who they know or previous relationships they do not get a real opportunity.

Ms. Colon said one of the issues in human resources is that HR should have the full anatomy to make professional, adequate decisions and to be supportive. She noted sometimes the decisions are hard. She added luckily she has not had the situation described by Mr. Illingworth. She said she would go to the superintendent if there was something she was not comfortable with and/or recuse

herself if necessary. She said she knows how things work in the superintendent's office.

In response to a question, Ms. Colon said the assistant HR director has been managing interactions with the State Labor Board. She said fortunately the situations she has been dealing with have been successful.

Mr. Illingworth noted the district cannot offer salaries as high as other districts can. Ms. Colon said from surveying teachers who leave the district the top reason they leave is management and the second reason is lack of support and supplies, and third is salary. He said if an employee is happy they will not be likely to leave because of the money. She said she would love to develop a division under HR devoted to learning and development, which would improve job satisfaction.

Ms. Colon said she had been involved in the recent collective bargaining agreement with the teachers and was involved in the prior agreement when she worked in the superintendent's office. She said she was proud of the fact that there were no teacher layoffs and everyone got an increase.

In response to a question, Ms. Colon said she believed the resolution of the contract through state mediation could have been avoided.

Ms. Colon said she hoped whoever was chosen would be part of a team. She noted there are only four fulltime employees in the department, plus a student intern, and a temporary employment. She said she hoped the superintendent and the board would look at investing in technology for the department.

Ms. Colon said her documentation failed to note she was promoted by Dr. Johnson to talent manager from being a recruiter.

Mr. Illingworth moved to deliberate in executive session. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved. Only Mr. Illingworth and Mr. Weldon participated in the executive session.

The executive session began at 7:40 p.m.

The committee resumed in public session at 7:51 p.m.

Mr. Weldon moved *“to convey the committee’s recommendation as discussed in the executive session to the superintendent.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Illingworth and unanimously approved.

Mr. Illingworth moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

*Approved by the committee on May 13, 2020*