

Thursday, February 28, 2019

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSONNEL  
COMMITTEE OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF  
EDUCATION, held February 28, 2019, at Bridgeport City  
Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon and Ben Walker. Board member Maria Pereira was present. Committee member Jessica Martinez arrived subsequently noted

Mr. Weldon said the purpose of the meeting was to conduct interviews for the positions of principal of Thomas Hooker School and director of speech and language.

The first candidate was Giovanna Ramos. Mr. Weldon said she had the option of holding the interview in public or executive session. Ms. Ramos chose the executive session.

Mr. Walker moved *“to go into executive session for the purpose of interviewing Giovanna Ramos, with herself, myself, yourself [Mr. Weldon], and chief talent officer, Frank Chester.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 6:10 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 6:12 p.m. Ms Martinez was now present.

Mr. Walker moved that *“we adjourn into executive session with our candidate, Ms. Ramos; committee member*

*Martinez; yourself, Mr. Weldon; myself, Mr. Walker, and our chief talent officer.”* The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 6:12 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 6:41 p.m.

The next candidate was Shaun Smith. Ms. Smith chose the option of a public session interview.

Ms. Smith described her background. She said she started out her career in New York City and fell in love with teaching. She moved to Connecticut and started at Harding and became the health magnet coordinator, which included writing grants. She said she was at Central next and last year was at Hooker School. She said she fell in love with the teachers, students and parents in Hooker School, where the test score data increased.

Ms. Smith said Thomas Hooker had been through a lot of changes and needed stability. She said the staff got on board with her approach in the year she was at the school as the interim principal.

Ms. Smith said she would target student achievement and develop strategies after looking at data. She said she would like to see the 33 percent ELA number get to 40 percent and then 50 percent. She said she would like to increase the math component from 15 percent into the twenties. She added she had a lot of ideas about science to bring to the table. She said she believed additional professional development was need for numeracy. She added she would be focusing on the culture and climate in the building, especially because of the diverse population with students

coming from different areas of the world. She said she would look to increase the attendance rate from the current 94 percent and to increase teacher morale.

Ms. Smith said it was important add capacity within the school in a period of budget cuts.

Ms. Smith said she believed the use of data was one of her strengths. She said she quickly picked up on data, such as the testing participation rate, when she first went to Hooker School. She said she immediately formed a schoolwide data team at the school.

Ms. Smith characterizing her management style as remaining calm even when things are crazy. She said she can assess the situation and determine the next step, without panicking. She said she was about teamwork.

Ms. Smith said given budget challenges she would motivate staff by looking for their different strengths. She said the year the literacy coach was removed from Hooker School there was a nine percent increase in ELA scores. She said she believed she was strong in scheduling and maximizing resources.

Ms. Smith said she would meet with teachers to build a team, including possibly at a retreat, and gathering feedback from them. She added she would want to set a mission and a vision for the school. She said she would like to form a team with parents and incorporate them into mentoring and tutoring.

In response to Ms. Smith's question, Mr. Weldon said he believed Thomas Hooker was looking for someone who can bring stability to the building, someone who is adaptable to

an older facility where things like a recent flood happened. Mr. Walker said he believed we're always looking for leaders who are inclusive and part of a team. Ms. Martinez said she believed the board was looking for a leader that described exactly what Ms. Smith understood that community to be.

Ms. Smith said if the board gives her the opportunity Thomas Hooker will be in the top three schools in three years.

Mr. Walker moved that *"we adjourn to executive session with the committee members, Martinez, yourself and myself, Ben Walker, along with the chief talent officer so that we can deliberate on personnel matters."* The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez and unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 7:17 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 7:27 p.m.

Ms. Martinez left the meeting.

The next agenda item was an interview of Laura Rivera for the position of director of speech, language and hearing.

Ms. Rivera did not require the interview to be in public session

Mr. Walker moved that *"we adjourn to executive session. Members present will be our candidate, Ms. Rivera; yourself [Mr. Weldon] as chair; myself as committee member; and our chief talent officer, Mr. Frank Chester."* The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.'

The executive session began at 7:29 p.m.

The committee reconvened in public session at 7:57 p.m.

Mr. Weldon said the committee has transmitted their recommendations to Mr. Chester for his transmission to the superintendent for her consideration.

Mr. Walker moved the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Mr. Weldon and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod