

Monday, May 3, 2021

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held May 3, 2021, by video conference call, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon, Vice Chair Bobbi Brown, Secretary Joseph Lombard, Joe Sokolovic, Sosimo Fabian, Chris Taylor, Albert Benejan, and Sybil Allen.

Supt. Michael J. Testani was present.

Mr. Sokolovic moved to consider Item 2 prior to Item 1. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brown and unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on possible action concerning adoption of the hearing officer's recommendation regarding Gladys Walker-Jones. Atty. Susan Nelson of Gesmonde, Pietrosimone & Sprignari, representing the union for Ms. Walker-Jones, was present, along with Atty. Floyd Dugas of Berchem Moses for the district. Mr. Weldon said the item qualified for executive session.

In response to an inquiry, Atty Nelson said her client had not shared whether she was requesting the discussion be held in public. Atty, Dugas noted the employee has the right to affirmatively object to an executive session.

There was a brief delay; Ms. Nelson said she would attempt to contact her client. She was unable to connect to her.

In response to a question about delaying the hearing, Atty. Dugas said a written decision was required by May 8th. He said he did not believe Atty. Nelson could legally request an executive session under FOIA. He said if we don't hear from Ms. Walker-Jones we'll have to proceed in public session.

Mr. Weldon noted the board members had received a document on the matter. He asked Atty. Dugas to provide an overview of the situation.

Atty. Dugas said the matter was to consider termination of Ms. Walker-Jones, who was a principal in the district. He said this is not a procedure under the collective bargaining agreement, but is governed by Connecticut General Statutes, 10-151, also known as the Teacher Tenure Act. The process is the superintendent notifies the employee of the consideration of the termination. He said, in May 2020 Supt. Testani notified Ms. Walker-Jones that her termination was under consideration. Ms. Walker-Jones neglected to request a hearing, however, a restart of the process occurred at the beginning of this school year.

Atty. Dugas said the employee has a choice to ask for a hearing before the board or before an independent hearing officer. Ms. Walker-Jones requested before a hearing officer, Atty. Gerald Weiner. A number of hearings were held and each side gets to present evidence and testimony. The hearing officer then makes findings of fact and a recommendation is made on what to do with the employee. He said the board must accept the findings of fact according to a Connecticut Supreme Court case, however, the board does not have to accept the hearing officer's recommendation.

Atty. Dugas said there were multiple days of hearing, along with extensive medical documentation spanning ten years. He said the medical situation goes back to January 2011 when the employee slipped on ice. He said he would not get into any diagnosis, but she was out of work for a few months and returned to work in April of 2011. He described further medical issues up to 2016, including absences and restrictions to sedentary work.

Atty. Dugas described a functional capacity test in March 2017, which included restrictions on lifting and being unable to care for her own grandchildren. He added there was a parallel workers' compensation case going on.

Atty. Dugas said there was an independent medical examination in June of 2017 in which the doctor found it extraordinary that someone would still be having symptoms almost six and a half years from the date of the injury. The employee returned to part-time work in August 2017. He said the testimony of the superintendent was being a school principal is up to a twelve-hour job per day, while she was only capable of working four hours. The district agreed to hire another part-time principal who basically did half her job for her, which continued for about a year and a half.

Atty. Dugas described another fall in January 2019 resulting in injuries, which was the last time the employee worked for the district. In a deposition, her doctor indicated he did not see her ever being able to do her job as a principal.

In May 2020, after the superintendent sent the first notification that he was considering termination, her doctor subsequently indicated she was able to work with restrictions which were described.

Atty. Dugas said the district paid the employee for 194 days of complete absence and for 406 days of part-time work. During the last ten years, she has averaged 44 days of absence per year, although there were some years with little or no absences. He said according to her doctor she is not cured and she will likely not be cured. He said the findings of fact indicate she has fallen no less than three times and has some balance issues.

Atty. Dugas said the hearing officer recommended termination given the facts. He noted the superintendent testified that being a principal is not an easy job and it requires long hours, with a need to be visible and mobile. Atty. Dugas said he had never seen a case like this go on for this length.

Atty. Dugas encouraged the board to adopt the recommendations of the hearing officer. He said the district had been more than patient with the employee. He said she could not do the job anymore and it was time to move on and permanently fill her spot.

Atty. Nelson said Ms. Walker-Jones worked for a number of years before 2011 when she did not have attendance issues, and she did not want the impression left that Ms. Walker-Jones was trying to take advantage of the system in some way.

Atty. Nelson said we were looking for an opportunity for her to try to return to work because she was improved. She said the next step for her may be applying for retirement in connection with disability. She said she had no information on the workers' compensation case.

Atty. Nelson said she objected to termination in punishment because it was an unfortunate situation.

Mr. Weldon said this has no bearing on her performance and is not about punishment. He said there may be other alternatives for her in employment with less demands and with disability resources.

Mr. Benejan said he believed Supt. Testani followed the protocol very well. In response to a question, Supt. Testani said the district spent close to \$150,000 for the days she worked part-time.

In response to a question, Atty, Dugas said she was originally hurt on district or city property. He said he was not aware if Supt. Aresta Johnson took action on Ms. Walker-Jones. He said she does not have a doctor's release saying that she can return to full active duty. He said he did not look at her employment evaluations over the twenty years she has been in the district.

Mr. Taylor said if she was exemplary employee it was a monumental pivot point for him in a decision. He said he would like to hear from Ms. Walker-Jones and he was not prepared to terminate. He suggested a probationary period if medically cleared for full duty.

Dr. Fabian said he would like to see a possible termination demonstrate our gratitude for the many years of good services that she gave us. He said he would like to see an amicable resolution, without the whiff of punishment.

Atty, Dugas said the HR department could help her get in touch with the appropriate person at the state regarding disability components to the teacher's pension. He added

there were multiple attempts to reach a resolution of the case with Atty. Gesmonde.

Supt. Testani said the union has support for its members. He said he knows this case on both ends and there have been numerous attempts over the years at counseling and advice, which fell on deaf ears. He said we were left with no other choice but separation. Attempts were made to separate on an amicable and transitioning approach. He said the doctor's restrictions that were proposed were beyond any normal accommodations and unrealistic.

Mr. Weldon said this was simply about the physical ability of the employee to do the work that's expected. Dr. Fabian asked if the employee is open to entering into an agreement given where we are now. Atty. Nelson said she would recommend that her client avail herself of the disability process, but she was not aware of the timing.

Supt. Testani said the collective bargaining unit has tried on multiple occasions to guide the employee, but the advice was not received well.

In response to a question, Atty. Dugas said the city's independent medical examiner did not believe the diagnosis of the employee's doctor. He said the workers' comp case is still pending after ten years, and she was being paid out of the workers' comp fund. When this proceeding started, she was put back on regular pay. He said there was no claim that she did not fall on the ice. He said he believed the fall off the chair was in controversy.

In response to a question, Supt. Testani said the restrictions in the doctor's letter included the need for frequent breaks and to be close to a bathroom at all times. He said he

believed that was a setup for failure if she cannot return with a clean bill of health. He said during the 16 months the employee was out of work claiming physical ailments there were photographs from a private investigator that contradicted the claims.

Mr. Sokolovic asked why the photos were not provided to the board. The superintendent said there were three days of proceedings before a hearing officer, which resulted in 19 pages of findings.

Mr. Weldon said the question ultimately is if the employee can do the job and the tasks that are required of her, and if the answer is no, then for the needs of the district and her own safety it is not a relationship that can continue. The superintendent said the employee chose going in front of the hearing officer, not the board. He said it would be counterproductive for the board to step in after she chose the venue and there should not be a do-over.

Mr. Sokolovic said he was gathering information in order to make his decision. He read a functional capacity evaluation that was performed located in the documents provided. He said the evaluation would seem to rule out a person in a wheelchair working for the district. Atty. Dugas said if such a person had never missed a day of work it would be a different conversation, but the employee has missed the equivalent of two complete years over ten years.

Supt. Testani said there is a teacher in the district who is paralyzed from neck down and has only missed about ten workdays in twenty years, while doing an exceptional job.

Mr. Weldon said this situation was that the employee can't do the job on a fulltime basis. Mr. Sokolovic said the

employee was put in this situation due to two accidents while in the performance of her duties and she had not been given reasonable accommodations.

In response to a question, the superintendent said the employee had been moved to different schools and been offered the ability to move, but every attempt has been turned down. He said when someone doesn't want to listen to the advice and guidance of everyone involved, this is where you end up.

Mr. Sokolovic asked if she could be offered sedentary administrative work. Supt. Testani said that would pay someone \$140,000 to do paperwork. Mr. Sokolovic said he did not want to be a district that already had recruitment problems and that tosses persons to the curb. He said he was leaning towards not terminating.

Mr. Weldon said over the last ten years various accommodations have been provided and offered, which were declined. He said at some point we have to say we've done everything we can, and the best option is to apply for disability benefits.

Dr. Fabian said Mr. Sokolovic is not far from where we need to be. He said he was ready to vote, but the best way to do this is to give Atty. Nelson time to talk to her client. Her client could decide to leave in an amicable fashion or the board has to vote.

Atty. Dugas said the written decision had to be issued in five days. There was a discussion of the scheduling considerations and availability. May 6th was selected as the potential date.

Dr. Fabian said he believed the delay was to give the employee the opportunity to resign, and if not, he would vote for termination. The superintendent suggested the board vote tonight to terminate unless a resignation letter is received by Wednesday.

Mr. Sokolovic said he was uncomfortable with the ultimatum. Mr. Weldon said resignation would remove the stigma of a termination. Mr. Sokolovic suggested she be offered an administrative position such as a principal on special assignment.

In response to a comment, Atty. Dugas said the board should not assume there is no issue about mental and cognitive consideration. The superintendent said he would not feel comfortable bringing her back under any circumstances as an administrator. Dr. Fabian said neither the law or common sense requires the district to create a position, and the employee has to perform the essential functions of the job.

Mr. Taylor said Dr. Fabian had come up with a brilliant solution to the quagmire. He urged the board vote now as recommended by the superintendent so the board does not have to reconvene.

In response to a question, Atty. Dugas said the provisions of ADA were offered to the employee. He said the ten years of the workers' comp case was the longest he had heard of in 35 years of practicing law in this area.

Mr. Benejan said the employee should go out with disability, not termination. Atty. Dugas said nothing about termination would stop her from being able to apply for a disability pension. He said one reason the matter took so long is

because the district does not throw people out on the street the minute an employee has an absentee problem. He said it was a complicated case on many levels.

In response to a question, Denise Altro-Dixon, director of human resources, said when dealing with workers' comp and injuries it takes it out of the regular work rules and policies and procedures, but attendance and inability to perform basic job duties tie in. She had these factors added to the hearing officer's conclusions.

Mr. Benejan said he agreed with the superintendent and the money should not be spent. He said the employee will be much better off with disability.

Supt. Testani said the district only had an obligation to pay the difference in workers' comp for time off for six months after the injury, not ten years. He said the district paid and paid and paid, and has done more than enough. He said she will do very well applying to the state teacher retirement disability, which will pay a significant portion of salary until she's eligible to retire. The years on disability count towards the pension.

Mr. Weldon said there are two potential motions. Dr. Fabian said the motions would be irrelevant if we get the resignation letter. He suggested a motion giving the employee two days to resign or to be terminated. He said he was taking Atty. Nelson at her word that she is recommending a similar course, but that is up to the client to accept or not. Atty. Nelson said that was fair and said she appreciated the choice being given to her client.

Mr. Weldon moved "*to postpone this meeting to continue on Thursday, May 7th, at 7:00 p.m.*" Mr. Taylor seconded the

motion, which was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Allen, Weldon, Taylor, Fabian, Brown, Lombard, and Benejan. Mr. Sokolovic abstained.

Mr. Weldon said Atty. Nelson if communicates a decision by the close of business on May 6th the board will not proceed any further with this. Atty. Nelson thanked the board.

The next agenda item was discussion and possible action regarding a new employment agreement with Michael J. Testani, which qualifies for executive session.

Supt. Testani said he was not requiring the matter be held in public.

In response to a question, Atty, Dugas said under the statute there cannot be an employment agreement for more than three years. Typically what is done is a new contract is created for three years and the prior one is null and void.

Mr. Weldon said there is not a new contract; the issue will be discussed. Mr. Taylor said the agenda item was misleading to the general public. Mr. Weldon said any action will be decided by the board.

Mr. Weldon said there is an existing agreement, which would be the basis, and any changes will be discussed.

Mr. Sokolovic noted Supt. Testani was appointed by a 6-3 vote. He said the contract called for an interim evaluation in January 2020 and at the end of the 2019-20 school year, neither of which happened. On January 6, 2020, the board was given a survey to rate the superintendent. He said he had been given longer surveys from Uber Eats to rate restaurants, but this was enough to offer the superintendent

a contract for three years, without negotiation and without a single board member reading the contract they approved. The contract was approved by a 7-2 vote. He said he was one of the members voting no.

Mr. Sokolovic said there was debate on the residency clause in the contract, which was ultimately included.

Mr. Sokolovic said in the almost two years since Mr. Testani was hired as acting superintendent there still is no evaluation to date on which to base a rationale for a contract extension. He said the special meeting prohibits public input on the board's most important function. He noted the current contract does not expire for two years, in 2023. He said there is no rush.

Mr. Sokolovic said consideration should be contingent on an evaluation from the board and Mr. Testani establishing residency in the city as called for in the contract. He said he will be voting no for the third time due to the lack of data and a lack of transparency. He said the board was doing a disservice to the public and the superintendent by doing things in this manner. He asked the superintendent to withdraw his request.

Supt. Testani suggested moving to the executive session so he can respond. Dr. Fabian said he agreed with the request and said he was strongly in support of granting an extension for the superintendent's remarkable service. He commended Supt. Testani for his ability to work with the board and parents. He described Mr. Sokolovic's comments as a type of election speech. He said he was here today to reward the superintendent for what he has done for our students.

Mr. Benejan seconded the motion.

Mr. Sokolovic said he wanted to respond to a personal attack by Dr. Fabian, who shows up every once in a while.

Mr. Weldon said the motion was to go into executive session to discuss a new contract with Supt. Testani. Mr. Sokolovic said it was political to go into executive session, and the matter could be handled in public just as the last agenda item was. He said he was always willing to say what he had to say in public.

Mr. Sokolovic moved to amend to go into executive session to discuss only the extension of Supt. Testani's contract. Mr. Weldon said that would be fundamentally changing the agenda item.

Mr. Sokolovic said there is no rush because the contract does expire until 2023. He said there was no harm in waiting until an evaluation.

The motion to go into executive session was defeated by a 5-3 vote. Voting in opposition were members Taylor, Benejan, Sokolovic, Brown, and Allen. Voting in favor were members Fabian, Weldon and Lombard.

Mr. Weldon said he had observed combative dialogue and urged the board member step back and try to be professional. He said according to the superintendent's contract he is permitted to make the request to consider a new agreement.

Mr. Sokolovic requested the contract be displayed on the screen.

Supt. Testani said the contract indicates prior to the end of the first year of the three-year agreement the board, at the request of the superintendent, may vote for a new agreement prior to the end of the first year. He said the rationale behind this is you cannot go into in the second year of a contract without sending a message to the district that there's a commitment level to the leadership. He said Bridgeport has had five superintendents over the last ten years and said this has affected the stability and climate and culture of the district, which impacts the level of teaching and learning. He said consistent leadership and longevity will allow me and the board to implement positive and meaningful changes. He said if the contract is not extended, it will send a clear message to the entire staff that what I am asking them to do may not last. He said we cannot continue on this revolving door of leadership.

Supt. Testani asked if he should continue or if there should be another meeting. Mr. Sokolovic moved to postpone the matter.

The superintendent said without consistent leadership and commitment to the school community we cannot move forward with positive change and outcomes for our kids. He said the evaluation done separately will allow the board to give me targeted areas to focus on, while showing growth and improvement.

Supt. Testani said we have gone through 14 months of a worldwide pandemic and the district has provided more in-person learning and support to students of any district in the state. He said New Haven and Hartford have not been close, even though we are the most underfunded district in the state. He said the district had received accolades from the state and from the U.S. Secretary of Education. He said

he'd like to think we've been able to accomplish so much because of his leadership.

The superintendent said other districts hire interim superintendents and within a couple of months they often them a contract because it is hard to find high-qualified leaders in this area. He said he would not apologize for what happened over a year. He said he was confident in what we're doing as a district, and working with the support of the board. He said he is basing his request on 20,000 students, 3,000 staff members, and the rest of the Bridgeport community who have recognized what we have had to accomplish is monumental. He said, if that is not enough, I don't know what else I can.

Dr. Fabian said the superintendent highlighted why the board should take action.

Mr. Weldon said the meeting went sideways before he could ask the superintendent if there was anything in the agreement he wanted to discuss. He added that Mr. Testani was offended.

In response to a question, Supt. Testani said the only reason he wanted to go into executive session was for the need to have a professional conversation. He said now the comments would be in the newspaper and the social media, which hurts his reputation. He said he is not a politician, but an employee of the board, and he believed he had done a good job in the community where he was born and raised. He said he had been here for almost fifty years. He said he was offended. He said he had been disrespected, despite showing respect to every board member at all times, and given 110 percent, without missing one day in the office since the closing on March 12th, because this is where he

needed to be. He said he sneaked into the building when it was closed to work.

Supt. Testani said enough is enough, and the district needs consistent leadership in order to grow, and someone who won't run away with years left on their contract. He said he wanted to be here.

Dr. Fabian urged narrowing the issue to what is on the table.

In response to a question, Supt. Testani said, besides the term of the contract, he was requesting that upon favorable evaluation there is a percentage increase to his annuity contribution each year and an extension of the time to establish residency. He said he did not see the harm on the residency given there is no real rationale as to why someone who lives five minutes away from the office wouldn't be afforded more time.

Mr. Weldon questioned the need for the residency requirement. The superintendent said he did not see why it was required to do his job. He said he found the body language of some board members disrespectful. He said he was requesting more time and a financial accommodation if there was going to be a residency requirement.

Mr. Weldon said he had never seen a specific requirement as to where you live and relocation costs are typically included in contracts such as this. He said he did not see a business value to the superintendent moving within the city limits.

Mr. Taylor asked why Dr. Johnson had to move to Bridgeport. Mr. Weldon said he did not make her move to Bridgeport; he said Mr. Bradley did that.

Mr. Taylor said Dr. Johnson had to move from Waterbury to Bridgeport and Supt. Testani, who does a fabulous job and is a great superintendent, has not honored the contract to establish residency in Bridgeport. Mr. Taylor said he does not negotiate after a contract is signed. He said the board did not provide any stipend for Dr. Johnson to move, which led him to believe the board was favoring a white male over a black female. He said he would support a pay raise of \$35,000 a year for the phenomenal work by Supt. Testani, but the residency says it all.

Mr. Weldon said Dr. Johnson negotiated her contract with her attorney and made her own choices.

Supt. Testani said he did agree to the residency provision and if there is a new three-year contract, there doesn't need to be a stipend, and he would request a percentage salary increase, since the salary has remained the same for four years now. He noted the salary is not competitive with comparable surrounding districts such as Stamford.

In response to a question, the superintendent said he had been looking for a residence and he would withdraw the request for an extension of time.

Mr. Taylor he supported an extra \$35,000, not the annuity increase. He said Mr. Testani is one of the hardest working people he knows and he supports him one hundred percent. He said he would like to see better relations with Local 1522.

Mr. Weldon asked about the definition of residency. He asked if an apartment that stays empties qualifies. Mr. Taylor said he didn't care if he lives in a shopping cart. Mr.

Weldon said there have been embarrassing circumstances where people do or don't live.

Supt. Testani said he would not rent a room in a rooming house.

Dr. Fabian said he was excited to talk about the positivity and the positive outcomes that the superintendent has brought to the district, and it was unbelievable where we are. Mr. Weldon said it was because one or two persons have a fixation with residency.

Mr. Benejan said he did not support executive session because we have nothing to hide. He said he had been friends with Mr. Testani for almost twenty years, but he does not mix friendship with business. He said the superintendent was doing an amazing job, even though he did things Mr. Benejan was not happy with. He said he would love to Mr. Testani stay in Bridgeport. He said the past was done and the board should talk about the present. He said it was a shame we had to go through this.

Ms. Brown said she believed Mr. Testani has done an amazing job and will continue to do so. She said the board had a responsibility to makes the public aware of what is going on. She said this was not politics, but keeping the board accountable. She noted the behavior displayed here impacts how people view the board. She said what is in the contract should be honored.

Dr. Fabian said he had seen first-hand the impact of good leadership and said he understood the importance of stability in leadership. He said students and parents would benefit from someone who openly states they want to be here because they're engrained in the community. He said he did

not believe a residency requirement is essential for commitment to the community. He said the way the meeting has gone has been less than inspirational and does not show the gratitude that the superintendent deserves. He said as a former educator he believed Mr. Testani was the right person and supported an extension and a dialogue about the other issues. He said the superintendent had the patience of a saint to work with this board.

Mr. Weldon said everybody seemed to agree they wanted Mr. Testani around for at least the next three years, with the other elements aside.

Mr. Sokolovic said he did not believe he said anything offensive to Mr. Testani and said he did not say anything about the superintendent's job performance. He said the board members who praised the superintendent's performance did not point to data. He said he did not want to rush a contract that does not expire until 2023. If the process was delayed four months, there would still be a continuity and possibly the full support of the board. He said his only concern was the board process.

Mr. Weldon said the contract indicates this kind of thing happens in the first year and the window closes on July 1.

Supt. Testani said he requested this after heavy consultation with current, former, and retired superintendents from all over the state. He said the extension and the evaluation do not go hand in hand. Unless you feel there is something egregious going on, evaluation is for professional growth and development, not to hold onto your job or not. He said the extension is a strong statement and a vote of confidence for leadership. He said this is how it's done all over. He said he did not understand the reluctance in Bridgeport that if there

is nothing to hide and you believe strongly in what we're doing in the district of being proud to say it.

The superintendent said he did not need an evaluation to show he believed in employees in the district. The evaluation is for professional growth. He said the board needs to provide him with feedback. He said he would not be giving the board a thick binder to tell everything he's done because that's not how it works in other districts. He said he will provide information and self-reflection, but the process is about growth.

Supt. Testani said he had thick skin and the public meeting was fine because he has nothing to hide, but what happened was what he expected. He said no one comes out looking good from what happened, and the one who is going to get all the comments is himself. He said people were tired of seeing the face of the district treated in an inappropriate, disrespectful manner for the sake of constituents. He said the constituents here are children. He said the well-being of children comes first, and we all need to understand that.

The superintendent said maybe he wears his heart on his sleeve too much, but not to be supported after all of this one hundred percent is a smack in the face.

Mr. Taylor said he believed everyone supported the superintendent, but his only objection was the residency requirement. He said no one has a problem with the superintendent's performance.

Dr. Fabian suggested extending the contract. Mr. Taylor said he would not extend a contract that hasn't been honored yet.

Mr. Weldon said he believed Mr. Testani gets upset at what is almost extortionist in nature. Mr. Taylor said this board made Dr. Johnson uproot from Waterbury and the contract had to be honored. Mr. Weldon said he did not want him to have to set up a faux residency, and also asked if it did not take place, if would the board fire Mr. Testani.

Mr. Benejan asked if all staff had to move to Bridgeport. Mr. Taylor said those staff members did not sign a contract.

Mr. Weldon suggested a vote on each of the items under discussion.

Mr. Weldon suggested a motion be moved to enter into a new employment agreement with Michael Testani, with a start and end date of July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2024. Mr. Taylor said it was not fair to the board since it was 9:00 o'clock at night. He said Mr. Weldon was absolutely corrupt.

Dr. Fabian moved "*to give a new agreement with a three-year period starting July 1st.*" The motion was seconded by Mr. Lombard.

The motion was approved by a 6-2 vote. Voting in favor were members Benejan, Brown, Fabian, Allen, Weldon, and Lombard. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Sokolovic were opposed.

Mr. Weldon suggested a motion to stipulate in this new agreement that Mr. Testani establish residency within one year of the beginning of the agreement.

Mr. Taylor said Mr. Weldon should be ashamed of himself.

Mr. Weldon asked about the definition of residency, including car registration and voter registration. He said the issue was

whether the residency requirement gets carried over to the next agreement or not. Ms. Alen suggested having to move into Bridgeport by a specific date.

Mr. Taylor said Mr. Weldon knows what he's doing and asked him to cut it out. He said a contract should be drafted for review by the board. He said this was crazy.

Mr. Sokolovic moved to postpone the rest of the discussion until Mr. Testani establishes residency in the city of Bridgeport. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor.

Supt. Testani said he would establish residency by July 1, 2021. Mr. Weldon asked what the definition of residency would be. Mr. Taylor objected to complicating it. Mr. Weldon said it would make him rent an apartment that he doesn't live in. Mr. Sokolovic said that would add to the Bridgeport tax base.

Supt. Testani asked everyone to stop because it was embarrassing. He said he would establish a residence by July 1st. He suggested discussing the remaining terms of the contract in the next couple of months. He said he would not accept the kind of money Mr. Taylor was throwing around, but a fair amount is due.

Mr. Weldon said now we've bribed him to take up residency.

Mr. Lombard moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brown.

Supt. Testani said he would like to have his contract ratified prior to the July 1st deadline. He had he would not renege on establishing a residency. He said if that is the trust factor

right now, then we have bigger problems than where he lives and who is superintendent.

Mr. Sokolovic said he believed the contract doesn't start until the board says it starts. The superintendent said the commitment level towards this administration is not exactly one hundred percent. He said there has been a level of disrespect. He said it was ridiculous that it all comes down to who did what when.

Mr. Taylor said the superintendent was absolutely great, but Mr. Weldon did not handle it properly.

There was a dispute about when the motion to adjourn was made. Mr. Taylor said this was unbelievable. Mr. Lombard said this was absolutely ridiculous.

Ms. Brown said she was not sure what motion was on the floor.

Mr. Benejan said he would support the superintendent if board members go after him and he would not be alone.

Mr. Sokolovic said there was a motion on the floor to postpone. Mr. Weldon said he did not hear it.

Mr. Sokolovic said the motion was to postpone the implementation of the contract and further discussion on Mr. Testani's contract until he establishes bona fide residence in the city of Bridgeport.

Mr. Weldon said we already voted to extend his contract, which could not be changed.

Mr. Sokolovic said somebody who voted for it can make a motion to reconsider.

Mr. Weldon moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan.

The motion was approved by a 7-1 vote. Voting in favor were members Allen, Taylor, Weldon, Lombard, Brown, Fabian, and Benejan. Mr. Sokolovic was opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at about 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

Approved by the board on May 3, 2021