

Thursday, May 9, 2019

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held May 9, 2019,
at Bridgeport City Hall, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport,
Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. Present were Chair John Weldon, Secretary Joseph Sokolovic, Sybil Allen, Hernan Illingworth, Chris Taylor, LaMar Kennedy, and Maria Pereira. Vice Chair Jessica Martinez arrived subsequently as noted.

The first agenda item was on establishing the board as a committee of the whole to act as a personnel search committee for the purpose of (1) hiring an interim superintendent and (2) hiring a permanent superintendent.

Ms. Pereira moved *“to make the Bridgeport Board of Education as a committee of the whole to act as the committee to search for both an interim superintendent and a permanent superintendent.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

Mr. Weldon said all nine members of the board would serve as a search committee for the interim superintendent and a permanent superintendent. The final decision would be made by the full board.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The next agenda item was on the issuance of an RFP to retain a search firm to solicit candidates for the position of superintendent.

Mr. Weldon said he disseminated a copy of the RFP that was used in July 2016. He noted updates were needed. He said he circled things in red that should be updated such as dates. He said he did not think Tony Pires needed to be present at this point.

Mr. Taylor said he was not versed in this. He suggested giving the RFP to Mr. Pires for updating without the board doing so. Mr. Weldon said the board would have to determine the timeline. Mr. Taylor said Mr. Pires was paid to do this sort of work.

Mr. Sokolovic said there were some educational aspects that have to be updated that Mr. Pires would not be aware of.

Ms. Pereira said under board policy every RFP comes through the board.

There was a discussion of the dates to employ. Ms. Pereira noted school ends in the South before Connecticut, so people there will be looking for jobs before June.

Mr. Weldon suggested June 1 be the RFP release, with proposals due no later than July 8th.

Mr. Weldon suggested the date to select a firm be July 19th, with the idea of awarding a contract by July 30th.

Ms. Pereira said the last time the board received about five proposals, but not all firms were interviewed.

Ms. Martinez arrived at the meeting.

In response to a question, Mr. Weldon said the estimated cost was between \$30,000 to \$50,000. Mr. Taylor said in a cash-strapped district we might be better off searching within our own walls. He said he sees a lot of talent in the district and we're always looking for Bridgeport people

Ms. Pereira said she wanted to see as many qualified candidates as possible. Mr. Weldon said the board always reserves the right not to retain anyone from the search.

Mr. Weldon said the process typically should take six months. He said under the timeline the interim superintendent would serve about a year.

Mr. Illingworth said the board would rate the three highest scoring firms and bring them in for an interview. Mr. Weldon said following the interviews the scoring would be revisited based on the interviews.

Ms. Pereira said the RFP should indicate selected proposers should be prepared to participate in interviews between July 23 and July 26.

Mr. Taylor said most organizations don't meet during July and August. He said he had summer plans and other members have plans with children. He suggested resuming the process in late August or September.

Mr. Weldon said that would push the process out a couple of months and the search firm could not be engaged until October.

Ms. Pereira said the board had met during every summer

when we need to meet. She said the last superintendent search included meetings during the summer.

Mr. Taylor said it was foolish of him to have consideration for anybody's time.

Mr. Weldon suggested the final selection of the search firm occur by August 3rd, with the contract to be awarded by August 26th. Ms. Pereira noted August 26th was the first regular board meeting of the school year.

Mr. Weldon said he was trying to anticipate what the proposer would come back with for a schedule. He said he anticipated September 16th for the search beginning and it ending by mid-December. He said the contract would end around mid-February. He said the new superintendent would start July 1st. Ms. Pereira said someone selected might be willing to start work earlier.

Ms. Pereira asked that the description of the district be updated for the current number of students and staff.

Ms. Pereira suggested increasing the value attached to past work experience.

Mr. Weldon said the most qualified firm would be selected, but then the price could be negotiated. If the board wasn't happy with the negotiations, it could move to the second-ranked firm.

Mr. Weldon said he could ask Mr. Pires if he could have the RFP ready for Monday's board meeting.

Ms. Pereira requested an electronic copy before the board meeting.

Mr. Weldon said when this meeting is adjourned the board could convene as a selection committee to talk about the interim superintendent.

Ms. Pereira moved *“to approve the edits to the RFP to retain a search firm to solicit candidates for the position of superintendent as discussed here this evening.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez and approved by a 7-1 vote.

Voting in favor were members Weldon, Martinez, Pereira, Illingworth, Kennedy, Allen and Sokolovic. Mr. Taylor was opposed.

Mr. Weldon said an executive search committee can operate on its own and doesn't fall under the same noticing requirements, so it could reconvene as a search committee.

Ms. Allen moved the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez and approved by a 7-1 vote.

Voting in favor were members Weldon, Martinez, Taylor, Illingworth, Kennedy, Allen and Sokolovic. Ms. Pereira was opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

Approved by the board on May 28, 2019