

ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

BOARD OF EDUCATION

BRIDGEPORT, CONNECTICUT

HELD DECEMBER 12, 2022

PRESENT:

JOSEPH GANIM, Mayor
BOBBI BROWN, Chair
CHRISTINE BAPTISTE-PEREZ, Vice Chair
JOSEPH LOMBARD, Secretary
SYBIL ALLEN
ALBERT BENEJAN
JOSEPH SOKOLOVIC
MICHAEL MACCARONE*
CHRISTINE BAPTISTE-PEREZ*

(*remote participation)

ALYSHIA PERRIN, Interim Superintendent of Schools

ATTY. MARK ANASASI, City Attorney's Office

Transcribed by: John McLeod

1 (The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.)

2 MAYOR GANIM: So, we're going to start in just -
3 we're going to acknowledge that there's a notice -
4 public notice - for today and it's addressed - what I'm
5 reading is the agenda. To board members: The annual
6 organizational meeting, which happens every year at
7 this time - not particularly on this day, but this
8 Monday - and today it's being held December 12th, 2022,
9 at 6:00 p.m., here as usual at the Bridgeport Regional
10 Vocational Aquaculture Science and Technology Center,
11 on 60 - it is St. Stephens Street? Okay. 60 St.
12 Stephens Street, Bridgeport.

13 Public access to the meeting is made available -
14 will be made by available by the link that's attached
15 there. I know we have members of the board that are
16 zoom - we'll call Zoomed in - which is actually Zoom,
17 but are in attendance, but I'll leave the actual quorum
18 in attendance for a minute.

19 And the agenda we're going to do is we will - we
20 will take attendance - assuming we have a quorum, which
21 I believe we do. We'll quickly call to order, and then
22 there will be the election of the officers in the
23 following order. Of chairman - or chairperson. There
24 will be nominations and votes. Then there will be vice
25 chair, nominations and votes, and secretary, nomination

1 and votes.

2 At some point along the way - and I've done it
3 both ways - I've turned it over to the chair -
4 sometimes after the appointment or election of the
5 chair - and then sometimes the chair will continue on
6 with the vice, and we can deal with that. But
7 certainly, at the end of that, then the chair would
8 take over, and the only other matter - I'll leave it up
9 to the board's discretion beyond that - but the only
10 other matter printed on the agenda is the approval of
11 the 2021 organizational meeting minutes.

12 So having said all that and being aware that there
13 is public access, that it is on, that we have at least
14 two board members that are behind us but not physically
15 here, can we take the rollcall so that we can verify
16 there's a quorum.

17 MR. LOMBARD: Sybil Allen.

18 MS. ALLEN: Here.

19 MR. LOMBARD: Christine Baptiste-Perez.

20 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: Present.

21 MR. LOMBARD: Albert Benejan.

22 MR. BENEJAN: Present.

23 MR. LOMBARD: Bobbi Brown.

24 MS. BROWN: Present.

25 MR. LOMBARD: Erika Castillo said she would not be

1 present. Joseph Lombard, present.

2 Michael Maccarone.

3 MR. MACCARONE: Present.

4 MR. LOMBARD: Joseph Sokolovic.

5 MR. SOKOLOVIC: Present.

6 MR. LOMBARD: All right, that's it. We have a
7 quorum.

8 MAYOR GANIM: So, we have a quorum. It's my
9 understanding there's nine members, one is - there's
10 actually only eight members now because we have one
11 kind of temporary - or pending vacancy.

12 So, with that, there's a quorum, and as was
13 mentioned, it's no secret, this is the organizational
14 meeting and it's chaired by charter by me as mayor.
15 And it's basically a process where at this time we'll
16 open for the first order of business, which is the
17 election of the officers.

18 And as indicated, the first officer to be elected
19 will be the chairman or the chairperson, and so at this
20 time - and again, before I open nominations, I can say
21 it now or we can do it after we open nominations, but
22 usually there will be a verbal nomination. I don't know
23 if we require a second or not. I usually like a second,
24 but, Mark, is it the board's practice that there's no
25 need for a second.

1 Well, why don't we do this. If there's going to be
2 a problem with a second, we'll raise the issue. I
3 don't know that there is or there isn't, but we'll deal
4 with it at that point. And then - but there are going
5 to be paper ballots for any names that go in - there
6 will be ballot, voting by paper ballot is that the -
7 continue to be the practice?

8 MS. BROWN: Yes.

9 MAYOR GANIM: Because you've upgraded some
10 technology since I was here last time, which is good.

11 MS. BROWN: The board members online can do via
12 Teams.

13 MAYOR GANIM: And so - and is that a practice - I
14 don't know - but that the board members that are online
15 - and because this part of it is new to me, I'll hear
16 from any board member - is it they will vote online by
17 what mechanism? It's called Team? So, they will be
18 able to log their vote in - and I don't know whether
19 it's visible or not, but as long as everyone's
20 comfortable with that process - and unless somebody
21 from the - from the - one of the members tells me that
22 they're not - I'm going to continue talk slowly, and
23 assume that everybody's on board for that -

24 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: Mr. Mayor.

25 MAYOR GANIM: Yes.

1 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: Last year, when we did the
2 organizational meeting, we had nominations, it was
3 second, then we did a rollcall vote where people voted
4 aloud. But we also did have people - I believe - vote
5 by ballot.

6 MAYOR GANIM: I don't know if we did. Well,
7 where's the minutes from - do we have the minutes.
8 from -

9 MS. BROWN: They're online.

10 MAYOR GANIM: Well, look it, I'm open to any way
11 the board wants to do it, so - and I don't think
12 there's a particularly right or wrong way. So, I'm at
13 the - I'm at the - I'm assuming to go forward - are you
14 objecting or kind of raising a concern about doing it
15 the way we're doing it, paper ballots? I can't even
16 see who I was talking to.

17 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: Well, I don't have an issue
18 with paper ballots.

19 MAYOR GANIM: Okay.

20 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: I'm just saying that the
21 nominations were seconded, so -

22 MAYOR GANIM: Okay.

23 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: - someone said, I want to
24 nominate X, it was seconded, and then a vote continued
25 from there.

1 MAYOR GANIM: You want -

2 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: And as far as paper ballots,
3 that's fine with me. I could have sworn we did a
4 rollcall vote when I looked over the minutes, but -

5 MAYOR GANIM: I don't - I don't remember that
6 myself. I've always noted differently than some others,
7 but, look it, as long as it's not big of how we vote,
8 that's fine. And if there's an issue that somebody
9 wants to discuss, whether you do it a second or not,
10 I'm fine with it.

11 Do you want to be heard on that?

12 MR. SOKOLOVIC: Yeah. A second is not required for
13 any nominations. That's according to Robert's Rules.
14 It's not written into any statutes or any legalese.
15 But I don't anticipate it being a problem.

16 MAYOR GANIM: If it becomes a problem, I'll rule
17 on it, and we can go from there. And I think you're
18 right on that.

19 So, with that -

20 MR. SOKOLOVIC: Just one more -

21 MAYOR GANIM: Sure.

22 MR. SOKOLOVIC: And as far as the paper ballots,
23 anything - we can do it verbally, but it's also got to
24 be reduced to writing as per statute.

25 MAYOR GANIM: I think we have a process. I think

1 unless we run into a problem we're not going to -
2 unless someone wants to raise an issue whether there's
3 a second or not as we go through it, then I'm not going
4 to deal with that issue. But we have paper ballots; we
5 have Team that they can vote on. And that will be the
6 way we proceed. Again, I'll hear anyone else before we
7 start because it's - okay, we're good.

8 So, at this point, I'm going to open the floor to
9 nominations. I'll look to my right and to my left and
10 see if I see a hand. Sybil, I see your hand. Would you
11 like to be recognized?

12 MS. ALLEN: I'd like to nominate Bobbi Brown.

13 MAYOR GANIM: Okay. Bobbi Brown's name is in
14 nomination. Is there a second? Do you want to second
15 or do you want to make -

16 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: Second.

17 MAYOR GANIM: Does somebody want to make it -

18 MR. LOMBARD: Second.

19 MAYOR GANIM: Okay. Just so we clear the air, we
20 have a second. That's fine.

21 MR. BENEJAN: I'd like to - for the record, I'd
22 like to nominate Mr. Joe Sokolovic as the chair.

23 MAYOR GANIM: Okay. Does anybody want to second
24 it?

25 MR. SOKOLOVIC: I'll second myself.

1 MAYOR GANIM: Okay. So, we have no issue on the
2 seconds. We have two names in nomination; we have a
3 process by where we're going to vote. And does anybody
4 else want to make any other nominations for
5 chairperson? I look to my left - left, right, I see no
6 hands, I hear no voices.

7 We'll close nominations, and then it looks like
8 we'll do a vote because we have more than one
9 candidate. So why don't we pass out - let the record
10 reflect that we have a piece of paper being passed out
11 and we'll recognize them as paper ballots that can be
12 filled out by the members.

13 So that's five that are handed out here and we
14 have two members online that won't get paper ballots,
15 is my understanding. I can't see you, so my apologies
16 for sounding impersonal when I talk to you. But you
17 will both vote by Team. If there's any issue with that,
18 we'll address it, but my assumption is we'll make it
19 through this without much problem.

20 MS. BROWN: I think they put it in the message. Do
21 you want them -

22 MR. LOMBARD: They could either e-mail it.

23 MS. BROWN: You guys can - do you have your
24 computer?

25 MR. LOMBARD: More confidential -

1 MS. BROWN: Yeah. Do you want them to e-mail it
2 to you?

3 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: You want the vote e-mailed?

4 MR. SOKOLOVIC: Point of information.

5 MS. BROWN: Yes.

6 MR. SOKOLOVIC: Confidentiality does not matter.
7 This vote is public record.

8 MR. LOMBARD: All right. Then they could put it in
9 the chat.

10 MS. BROWN: So, you guys can put it in the chat,
11 then, and then you can read it aloud.

12 MAYOR GANIM: If you don't mind, if someone has a
13 concern about that, raise it now. Otherwise, it seems
14 to be the simplest way -

15 MS. BAPTISTE-PEREZ: Sam, do you see my vote? I
16 already posted it.

17 MS. BROWN: Yeah, Sam sees it. Sam will read
18 them.

19 MAYOR GANIM: Okay.

20 ATTY. ANASTASI: Mayor, the bylaws specifically
21 say the votes will be reduced to writing and made
22 available within 24 hours.

23 MAYOR GANIM: So are you saying we should ask the
24 two members that are online to somehow reduce their
25 vote to writing.

1 MS. BROWN: E-mail.

2 ATTY. ANASTASI: Yes, they should e-mail it
3 somehow and make it available.

4 MAYOR GANIM: All right. So why don't we just close
5 that loop. Even though we may have the votes - you
6 don't have your e-mail, but they could also e-mail it
7 to you. This way you have it, so we close the loop on
8 having - what is it, seven votes? - in writing. Do
9 they have your e-mail? Do you have -

10 MR. MACCARONE: I - I don't - what is - what is the
11 e-mail address?

12 MS. BROWN: So, guys -

13 MR. BENEJAN: Ms. Santos, Ms. Santos.

14 MS. BROWN: Yeah. So, you guys are going to send
15 - you guys can put your ballot inside of the Teams for
16 now, but within 24 hours it needs to be e-mailed to Ms.
17 Arlene. And her e-mail is in - so Christine has already
18 sent. So, Mr. Maccarone, you just need to send yours.
19 And you're going to send it to Ms. Arlene.

20 MR. MACCARONE: Okay. So -

21 MS. BROWN: No, no. No, his - the -

22 MR. BENEJAN: E-mail.

23 MS. BROWN: Yeah, the printed out. Right now, -

24 MR. MACCARONE: So - so -

25 MS. BROWN: All right Mr. - Mr. Maccarone, you can

1 put it in Teams.

2 MR. MACCARONE: Okay. So how do I put it in Teams?
3 I'm sorry.

4 MS. BROWN: Are you on your phone?

5 MR. MACCARONE: Yup, I'm on my phone.

6 MS. BROWN: So, we're in the new age of - well,
7 we're going to read the votes aloud. We'll read them
8 aloud, so -

9 MAYOR GANIM: Yeah, if you don't have a problem
10 with that, I mean, as long as we get everyone's intent
11 out and - and there's no confusion about that and
12 there's no confusion over the vote, then I'm satisfied
13 with it, and we will acknowledge the city attorney's
14 requirement that at some point it be put in writing. I
15 don't know what means.

16 MR. MACCARONE: Okay.

17 MAYOR GANIM: It could be an e-mail, it could be
18 in - in the minutes, but I want to - we want to respect
19 the process in case someone wants to -

20 MS. BROWN: Correct.

21 MAYOR GANIM: - question it later on for whatever
22 reasons. So, she's counting the paper votes, right?

23 MR. LOMBARD: Mike -

24 MS. BROWN: Mike's going to say his because he
25 doesn't know how to put it in.

1 MAYOR GANIM: The only difference, Mike, so that
2 we're very clear, is that all the other ballots are -
3 their names are not attached to it - as long as you
4 don't have a problem with that. I want to treat
5 everybody who votes the same way. But as long as you
6 don't have a problem with that - and I'm not suggesting
7 you should - do you have six there? I mean, five plus
8 one on - in chat?

9 MS. BROWN: Yes.

10 MAYOR GANIM: Yes? Okay. So, we have - we have
11 one left to vote?

12 MS. BROWN: No, he's going to say his verbally
13 because he doesn't know how to do it.

14 MAYOR GANIM: Go ahead, would you like to vote
15 verbally?

16 MR. MACCARONE: Are you talk - are you talking to
17 me?

18 MAYOR GANIM: Yeah, I apologize. I apologize, the
19 difficulty -

20 MR. MACCARONE: Okay. My vote - Mr. Mayor -

21 MAYOR GANIM: Yes, please, Mike.

22 MR. MACCARONE: - my vote is for Bobbi Brown.

23 MAYOR GANIM: Okay. So, one vote for Bobbi Brown.
24 And we have six votes remaining.

25 MS. BROWN: Say the person's name and the vote.

1 Yeah.

2 MS. SANTOS-DEJESUS: Okay. For Bobbi Brown, I have
3 Bobbi Brown; one vote. Sybil Allen: Bobbi Brown; two.
4 Joseph Lombard: Bobbi Brown; that will be three.
5 Christine Baptiste-Perez: Bobbi Brown; that will be
6 four. Michael Maccarone: Bobbi Brown; that would be
7 five. Joseph Sokolovic: Joseph Sokolovic; one. Albert
8 Benejan: Joseph Sokolovic; two.

9 MAYOR GANIM: Okay. Unless someone else - we'll
10 just take a pause, not that we need to say anything,
11 but if anybody wants to say anything at this point, the
12 votes appear to be accurate; they've been read; they've
13 been written; they've been sent it. One's verbal, which
14 will be closed the loop on. And I would say that the
15 votes show Bobbi Brown is the new chairperson for the
16 Board of Education. A round of applause. Applause for
17 this difficult job. It's nice to get them. You know,
18 the best - challenging, but you have a great board and
19 I know your experience will serve you well.

20 The question I have for you now is, do want the
21 experience of handling the vice chair, and - what's the
22 third officer we have? The -

23 MS. BROWN: Secretary.

24 MAYOR GANIM: And the secretary.

25 MS. BROWN: Yes.

1 MAYOR GANIM: And then I will go to - I'll tell you
2 what. We'll go - there's a memorial for Yvette Brantley
3 and for John Olson, both in the 132nd District of the
4 West Side with a tree lighting, so I will beg your
5 indulgence if you do take over at this point. And two
6 council members who served the city well who are being
7 remembered today there.

8 So, do you need me for anything further?

9 MS. BROWN: No.

10 MAYOR GANIM: Anyone?

11 MS. BROWN: You're all set.

12 MAYOR GANIM: Does the city attorney need me for
13 anything further? Any members of the board? Any
14 members of the public?

15 Other than I can say is, I guess from all of us,
16 as we enter the holiday seasons, I wish everyone safe
17 and happy holidays, through this board, through the
18 city administration, through the - all of us, we look
19 forward to making and working hard and making the best
20 as we enter the new year for all of our residents,
21 students - everyone who is involved in the city of
22 Bridgeport.

23 One thing, a point of personal privilege. I never
24 get to hit one of these. Can I just hit it a couple of
25 times?

1 MS. BROWN: Sure, Mr. Mayor.

2 MAYOR GANIM: All right. Thank you. Thank you.

3 MR. MACCARONE: Thank you, Mayor.

4 MS. BROWN: All right. So, we're going to move on
5 to vice chairman. I'm going to open up the floor for
6 vice chairman.

7 MR. LOMBARD: I'd like to nominate Christine
8 Baptiste-Perez.

9 MS. BROWN: We have one. Is there a second?

10 MR. MACCARONE: I second.

11 MS. BROWN: All right. Is there another
12 nomination for vice chair? Is there another nomination
13 for vice chair? One more time. Is there a nomination
14 for vice chair?

15 Hearing none, I don't believe we need to vote on
16 it because - yes? Okay. Yes, we do need to vote on
17 it.

18 All right. So, we'll do paper ballots again for
19 the record, and then we'll just read it aloud. And
20 we'll just have you read them aloud.

21 (There was a delay.)

22 MS. BROWN: We'll start by - Mr. Maccarone, feel
23 free to say your vote over the - out loud for the
24 record, and then we'll have -

25 MR. MACCARONE: Okay.

1 MS. BROWN: - and then we'll have Ms. - go ahead.

2 MR. MACCARONE: Okay. I vote for Ms. Christine
3 Baptiste-Perez.

4 MS. BROWN: All right. Ms. - ready when you are.
5 Go ahead.

6 MS. SANTOS-DEJESUS: For vice chairman, I have
7 Albert Benejan voted Christine Baptiste-Perez. Joseph
8 Sokolovic: Christine Baptiste-Perez. Joseph Lombard:
9 Christine Baptiste-Perez. Bobbi Brown: Christine
10 Baptiste-Perez. Sybil Allen: Christine Baptiste-Perez.
11 Michael Maccarone: Christine Baptiste-Perez. And
12 Christine Baptiste-Perez is Christine Baptiste-Perez.

13 MS. BROWN: Thank you. Let the record reflect, Ms.
14 Christine, congratulations.

15 MR. MACCARONE: It's great. Very good.

16 MS. BROWN: All right. Our next one is secretary
17 nominations. I'll open up the floor for nominations for
18 secretary.

19 MR. SOKOLOVIC: I'd like to nominate Albert Benejan
20 for secretary.

21 MS. BROWN: I'd like to nominate Mr. Lombard,
22 Joseph Lombard. Oh, wait, do we want a second? Sorry,
23 I know we were doing it.

24 MR. SOKOLOVIC: A second is not required.

25 ATTY. ANASTASI: Seconds are not required.

1 MS. BROWN: Okay. We were just - okay. Is there
2 any - is there any other nominations? Are there any
3 other nominations? One more time. Are there any other
4 nominations?

5 So, we have two candidates; we have Albert Benejan
6 and Mr. Joseph Lombard. We can start the ballot
7 process.

8 (There was a delay.)

9 MS. BROWN: Whenever you're ready. All right.
10 We're going to - Mr. Maccarone, feel free to start off
11 by sharing who did you nominate - I mean, who did you
12 vote for.

13 MR. MACCARONE: I would - I would vote for Joe
14 Lombard.

15 MS. BROWN: Okay. All right. And now Ms. Santos.

16 MS. SANTOS-DEJESUS: I have Christine Baptiste-
17 Perez: Joseph Lombard. Joseph Sokolovic: Albert
18 Benejan. Albert Benejan voted for Albert Benejan.
19 Joseph Lombard voted for Joseph Lombard. Bobbi Brown:
20 Mr. Lombard. Sybil Allen: Joseph Lombard.

21 MS. BROWN: Okay. Tabulations, Mr. Lombard. All
22 right.

23 MR. MACCARONE: Very good.

24 MS. BROWN: This process concludes the election of
25 officers. Officers will - you know, to their positions.

1 At this moment, we're going to have - I'll
2 entertain a motion for approval of 2021 organizational
3 meeting minutes. Is there a motion to approve?

4 MR. BENEJAN: So moved.

5 MS. BROWN: Moved by Mr. Benejan. Is there a
6 second?

7 MS. ALLEN: Second.

8 MS. BROWN: Second by Ms. Allen. All in favor?

9 ("Ayes" were sounded.)

10 MS. BROWN: Any opposed? Any abstentions?

11 Meeting minutes have been approved.

12 All right. Now I would like to entertain a motion
13 to adjourn the meeting.

14 MR. BENEJAN: So moved.

15 MS. BROWN: Motion by Mr. Benejan. Is there a
16 second?

17 MR. SOKOLOVIC: Second.

18 MS. ALLEN: Second.

19 MS. BROWN: Second by Ms. Allen. All in favor?

20 ("Ayes" were sounded.)

21 MS. BROWN: Any opposed? Any abstentions? Hearing
22 none, have a good night, everyone. We'll see you
23 tomorrow for our regular board meeting. Special
24 meeting; that is our regular meeting. Goodnight,
25 everyone.

1 (The meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.)

2

3 (*Approved by the board on December 11, 2023*)

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE
AND ACCURATE TRANSCRIPT OF THE RECORDING OF THE
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF
EDUCATION, HELD BY BRIDGEPORT REGIONAL
AQUACULTURE SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
CENTER, ON DECEMBER 12, 2022.

DATED THIS 14TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2021.

JOHN McLEOD