



Town of Reading Meeting Minutes

Board - Committee - Commission - Council:

School Committee

Date: 2016-07-25

Time: 7:00 PM

Building: School - Memorial High

Location: Superintendent Conference Room

Address: 82 Oakland Road

Session: Open Session

Purpose: Open Session

Version: Final

Attendees: **Members - Present:**

Jeanne Borawski, Linda Snow Dockser, Chuck Robinson, Elaine Webb (arrived at 7:05 p.m.), Gary Nihan,

Members - Not Present:

Julie Joyce, Student Representatives Nazzaro and Cutone

Others Present:

Superintendent John Doherty, Director of Student Services Carolyn Wilson, Chronicle Reporter Al Sylvia, Wood End principal Joanne King, Town Accountant Sharon Angstrom, Interim Human Resources Administrator Jenn Bove

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Linda Engelson on behalf of the Chair

Topics of Discussion:

I. Call to Order

Chair Borawski called the School Committee to order at 7:02 p.m.

II. Recommended Procedure

A. Public Input

Chair Borawski asked for public input on items not on the agenda.

There was none.

B. New Business (out of order)

Director of Finance Interviews

Chair Borawski said the Committee would be interviewing three candidates for the position of Director of Finance.

Dr. Doherty gave a brief overview on the three candidates and then reviewed the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Mrs. Webb arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Dr. Doherty said that this position is a comprehensive Central Office Administrative position.

Gail Dowd

Mrs. Borawski welcomed the candidate and introduced the members of the School Committee.

Ms. Dowd provided an overview of her experience and credentials.

Mr. Robinson congratulated Ms. Dowd on becoming a CPA and followed by saying that he views this position as the CFO of the School Department. He asked how the candidate would work with the public and town committees in getting information to them.

Ms. Dowd responded by saying that she would present information and data to all being sure that she got the message across at all experience levels. She would provide information prior to meetings to allow the participants to review. She would listen to the questions and adjust the information that was being discussed.

Mrs. Webb said that this is a big shift from the private to public sector and wanted to know what would be the biggest areas of learning.

Ms. Dowd responded by saying she has always been interested in working in the public sector and has built up a great of skills that are transferable. She has worked with nonprofit organizations in the area.

Mrs. Webb followed up by asking if she has any municipal experience on boards or committees.

Ms. Dowd responded that she regularly attends the open Town Meeting in her community and she has worked with her husband who is the School Resource Officer in Andover.

Mrs. Joyce prefaced her question by pointing there are limited resources and asked what kind of resources would be needed to be successful.

Ms. Dowd responded that she would learn on the job and would not be afraid to ask questions, network and would do research to formulate solutions to challenges. She will also take advantage of mentoring available through MASBO.

Dr. Nihan asked where she expected to see herself in five years.

Ms. Dowd responded by saying she has a long tenure at her current position and this is the direction she wants to go – being able to grow, develop, commit and feel challenged.

Dr. Snow Dockser asked if the candidate is familiar with the Town's accounting software – MUNIS.

Ms. Dowd responded that she has not used MUNIS but is confident she will be able to learn this system.

Mrs. Webb followed up asking how the candidate would handle a small support team.

Ms. Dowd said she has been through downsizing in her current position. She will roll up her sleeves and do whatever needs to be done. Long work days do not scare her; she effectively budgets her time and resources to meet the challenges.

Dr. Snow Dockser asked if the candidate has dealt with an override scenario. She responded that she had not specifically dealt with an override and would have to understand the nuances, steps and pitfalls. She would gather as much information and tap into other sources for this information.

Chair Borawski asked if she had looked at the budget document and would she consider any changes. Ms. Dowd said she had and said it was a very large document with a lot of information. She would look for redundancy in the document. She would like to have the numbers in the front portion of the document and supporting information in sections following the financial information.

Mrs. Borawski thanked Ms. Dowd for attending this evening.

Joseph Tortorelli

Mr. Tortorelli provided an overview of his experience and credentials.

Dr. Snow Dockser asked if the candidate is familiar with the Town's accounting software – MUNIS.

Mr. Tortorelli said he was not but has been several implementations of financial systems and is confident that he will be able to adapt.

Mrs. Webb asked about presenting at Town Meeting. Mr. Tortorelli said he would be sure to be prepared by knowing his material. He would know his audience and anticipate difficult questions. If he did not have an answer he would be sure to provide the answer when he had it.

Mrs. Joyce prefaced her question by pointing there are limited resources and asked what kind of resources would be needed to be successful.

Mr. Tortorelli said he would get the biggest bang for his buck working with the resources available to him. He said he would find it challenging to work within parameters.

Dr. Nihan asked where he expected to see himself in five years and what sets him apart from the other candidates.

Mr. Tortorelli feels he will be making more of a personal contribution having a positive tangible impact. He feels his technology skills and soft skills (people, cooperation, decision making & collaboration) set him apart.

Mr. Robinson began by saying that he views this position as the CFO of the School Department. He asked how the candidate would work with the public and town committees in getting information to them.

Mr. Tortorelli said he will be well prepared and comfortable when dealing with the stakeholders.

Mr. Robinson followed up by asking if the candidate had been involved with union contract negotiations. Mr. Tortorelli said he has not been directly involved in a negotiation process.

Chair Borawski asked if he had looked at the budget document and would he consider any changes. Mr. Tortorelli said he had and said it was a very large document with a lot of information. He would come to the School Committee for suggestions but would provide more of a summary putting in a form that the public could better understand.

Kim Grady

Ms. Grady provided an overview of her experience and credentials.

Dr. Nihan asked where he expected to see herself in five years and what sets her apart from the other candidates.

Ms. Grady said she has a proven track record of staying at a job for many years. She is also from Reading and is familiar with the schools, town and past history.

Mrs. Webb stated that our administrators work tirelessly and the demands are significant. She asked the candidate to compare to her current role.

Ms. Grady said she is used to working long hours and will be proactive.

Mrs. Joyce prefaced her question by pointing there are limited resources and asked what kind of resources would be needed to be successful.

Ms. Grady said she would seek out a mentor and gather as much information as possible on how the schools work.

Dr. Snow Dockser asked if the candidate is familiar with the Town's accounting software – MUNIS.

Ms. Grady said she has not used this system but is a quick learn and is confident that she will have no problems working with MUNIS.

Mr. Robinson began by saying that he views this position as the CFO of the School Department. He asked how the candidate would work with the public and town committees in getting information to them.

Ms. Grady said she does not do many presentations at her current position but feels she will be able to become comfortable as she becomes more familiar with the job.

Chair Borawski asked if she had looked at the budget document and would she consider any changes. Ms. Grady said she had and said it was a very large document with a lot of information. She would put the key components in the beginning and details in the back of the document.

Mrs. Borawski asked what the candidate saw as a transition plan for the first 6 – 12 months. Ms. Grady said she would meet with as many people as possible to gain as much knowledge.

Ms. Grady thanked the Committee for the opportunity.

C. Reports

Liaisons

Mrs. Webb shared that she and dr. Snow Dockser attended the recent Zoning Board Charrette.

D. New Business

First Reading of Revised Policy JICH & JICH-R

Dr. Doherty reviewed the changes to this policy and guideline.

He said changes made to Policy JICH were a result of the recently enacted Opioid Law and the changes to the policy have been recommended by MASC. Changes made to JICH-R have been recommended by Mr. Bakr, Mr. Zaya, SRO Muolo and Ms. McNamara. The group held several meetings to discuss the revisions.

The School Committee asked clarifying questions. Dr. Doherty said much of this guideline has come from the MIAA.

Mrs. Webb moved, seconded by Dr. Snow Dockser, to waive the first reading of the policy.

The School Committee suggested revisions to JICH-R.

The motion carried 6-0.

E. Old Business

FY18 Budget Preparation

Dr. Doherty handed out a document that now includes the suggestions made by the Committee and public regarding the rationale for the FY18 budget discussion items.

The School Committee asked clarifying questions.

III. Routine Matters

a. Bills and Payroll (A)

Warrant S1656	6.30.16	\$103,275.46
Warrant S1704	7.21.16	\$83,977.67

b. Calendar

IV. Information

V. Future Business

VI. Adjournment

Mr. Robinson moved, seconded by Mrs. Joyce, to enter into executive session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation and not to return to open session. The roll call vote carried 6-0. Mr. Robinson, Dr. Nihan, Mrs. Joyce, Mrs. Borawski, Mrs. Webb and Dr. Snow Dockser.

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.

NOTE: The minutes reflect the order as stated in the posted meeting agenda not the order they occurred during the meeting.

John F. Doherty, Ed.D.