

Salem School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Monday, June 25, 2018

A Special School Committee Meeting of the Salem School Committee was held on Monday, June 25, 2018 at 7:35 p.m. in the School Committee Chambers at Collins Middle School, 29 Highland Avenue, Salem, MA.

Members Present: Ms. Mary Manning, Mr. James Fleming, Ms. Kristine Wilson, Ms. Ana Nuncio, Mr. Manny Cruz, Ms. Amanda Campbell, and Mayor Kimberley Driscoll

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Margarita Ruiz, Superintendent, Kate Carbone, Assistant Superintendent, Margaret Marotta, Assistant Superintendent, Kristin Shaver, Business Manager, Kelley Rice, Chief of Communications, and Jill Conrad, Chief of Systems Strategy

Call to Order

Mayor Driscoll called the regular meeting of the Salem School Committee to order at 7:35 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Fleming moved to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Special School Committee Meeting

Mayor Driscoll provided an introduction of the purpose of the meeting as listed on the agenda for this evening. Superintendent Ruiz referred to her memorandum to the School Committee, explained that Ms. Cindy Rosenberg withdrew from her candidacy for the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services, and that Ms. Deborah Connerty was offered to consider the position of Interim Executive Director of PPS but respectfully declined. Superintendent Ruiz explained that they will repost the position to begin a new search process and requested a vote from the School Committee to appoint Ms. Connerty as the Acting Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services (PPS) until a permanent leader is hired. Ms. Ruiz informed the School Committee that Ms. Connerty agreed to serve in this capacity to ensure that the district continues to provide a high level of services and supports to children and their families during the transition period, if the School Committee votes in favor. Superintendent Ruiz continued that the Administrators' Association contract allows for Ms. Connerty to serve in this capacity until the position is filled. It is difficult to be in the position they are in at this time without a viable candidate. Ms. Ruiz asked School Committee members to consider her recommendation to appoint Ms. Connerty serve as Acting Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services (ED of PPS) who has agreed to support in this role until the position is filled.

Discussion

Mr. Fleming asked Superintendent Ruiz if Ms. Connerty explained why she turned down the Interim Executive Director and instead accepted the Acting Executive Director position. Ms. Ruiz responded that Ms. Connerty clearly expressed that she is not interested in the position, she would help the district in light of the transition to ensure the student program move forward until a permanent placement is found. Mr. Fleming expressed concern that Ms. Connerty, had applied and was found to be one of two qualified applicants, but was not offered the permanent position of Executive Director rather than Interim Executive Director. Ms. Ruiz clarified that she presented a recommendation for a qualified experienced candidate to the Committee and the

candidate brought forth before the Committee is not only experienced in the area of Special Education but also in the financial aspects of business, although she later withdrew her candidacy. The Superintendent continued that Ms. Connerty clarified her interest in serving as Acting Director until the position is permanently filled. Mr. Fleming asked if notice, of Ms. Rosenberg's withdrawal and Ms. Connerty's willingness to temporarily serve as Acting Director, was sent to School Committee members today, because he had not received one. Mayor Driscoll commented that she received an email at 6:10pm and then another email that went out. Superintendent Ruiz said she had mistakenly sent a draft memo, via email, without letterhead and another more finalized version.

Review and Discuss the Hiring Process for the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mayor Driscoll explained she wants to make sure everyone understands the goals of the School Committee relative to moving forward with the practices of the hiring process for the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services. They had discussions, at prior meetings, with respect to the hiring practices they want to follow for this position. They had two members of the School Committee serving on a Search Committee, as members have served on various search committees in the past as in the spring where certain positions were filled. There was an addition to the process, an added '*Meet and Greet*' component for final candidates. The Superintendent would then make a final recommendation. Mayor Driscoll continued sharing further details of what has recently transpired. Ms. Campbell said she is not necessarily opposed to the current hiring process and is certainly open to exploring other options if it is the desire of the School Committee and that they may need to have a more clear understanding of the overall hiring process. Having a better idea of what the exact performance deal and measure would be more beneficial for her and a more reasonable set amount of time before receiving notifications rather than receiving notifications far too close to the start of a meeting. Receiving notifications close to the start of a meeting is a challenge, as it does not allow sufficient time for careful review. Mr. Fleming agreed with Ms. Campbell and suggested the full School Committee be committed to do the hiring review rather than having another committee propose two School Committee members for that. The School Committee should be able to send the finalists to the Superintendent where a selection can then be made and ultimately voted on. Ms. Manning stated she would rather use the process they have in place at the present time for immediate movement towards the hiring of the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services and then take the time to examine the overall hiring process they could use going forward.

Ms. Campbell communicated the need for a more thoughtful process and would like to see a few tweaks on the hiring process; she understands that the specifics is part of the assessment but she would like to hear more about the Performative process in order to have more information for them to better understand and help them weigh the value of their assessment on the Performative. Superintendent Ruiz responded they could provide more general information and asked the School Committee for an element of trust. Mayor Driscoll shared her perspective that performatives are not a secret to anyone in the industry and suggested more information on what the Superintendent thinks is important, what that process looks like, how a candidate performed in that it can give them greater understanding of the 'why.' Mayor Driscoll continued that she thinks it would be helpful and also shared they should look at this as a partnership in terms of while the School Committee has the appointing authority, the Superintendent is held accountable with what goes on in the district. There has to be a partnership that respects the degree of information the School Committee are looking for, as School Committee candidates have to vote on something, along with a degree of trust for the School Superintendent who ultimately is going to be responsible for that candidate. Mr. Fleming said that it is necessary that whichever way they go forward, in terms of changing or

maintaining the current selection process that they get a history of reviews from the School district in which candidates come from. Members engaged in further discussion.

Summation of the Review and Discussion of the Hiring Process for the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mayor Driscoll summarized the points of concerns: More information on the Performative would be helpful, greater understanding of the candidate’s performance, without a break in confidentiality but try to understand what the Superintendent is looking and asking for, and what, those responses were, and if there are reviews with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), the School Committee make sure that they are at the front end of the process so that people are aware that it has been looked into and the issues have been discussed. Ms. Campbell added that the School Committee needs to have a very clear timeline of when finalists are announced to allow the public the opportunity to weigh in, not have it announced to School Committee members just before a meeting and to the public, during the meeting; the Superintendent’s recommendation needs to be provided within reasonable amount of time for School Committee members and the public. Members agreed. Mayor Driscoll summarized that School Committee members serving on a search committee along with others now have, for the next process, an opportunity to make sure that when having agreed on finalized candidates now have more time for that to occur and for School Committee members to participate in acknowledgement of who those finalists are, more information on the Performative process, and a period of time to bring that recommendation to the School Committee. Members engaged in further discussion and agreed to know the composition of the search committee, identify those individuals, and have more clarity with respect to what the search committee strongly feels about or recommends to the Superintendent. Further discussion ensued.

Response to Questions Raised During the June 18, 2018 School Committee Meeting

Mayor Driscoll explained there were some concerns expressed, at the last School Committee meeting, with respect to how the hiring process was handled, the comments that were made during that process, and what transpired. School Committee members shared their thoughts, clarified any possible miscommunication, expressed concerns and engaged in further discussion.

Deliberation and Vote to Appoint the Acting Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Mr. Fleming motioned to approve the appointment of Ms. Deborah Connerty to serve as Acting Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services (ED of PPS). Ms. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the School Committee this evening, Mr. Fleming entertained the motion to adjourn. Mr. Cruz seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by:

Angelica Alayon, Secretary
Salem School Committee

Meeting Materials and Reports

School Committee Agenda June 25, 2018
Superintendent Memorandum Handout