

**Board of Education
Newtown, Connecticut**

Minutes of the Board of Education special meeting on Monday, March 4, 2013 at 7:30 p.m. in the Reed Intermediate School library.

D. Leidlein, Chair	J. Robinson
L. Roche, Vice Chair	L. Gejda
C. McCubbin, Secretary (absent)	R. Bienkowski
R. Gaines	3 Staff
W. Hart	10 Public
K. Alexander	3 Press
J. Vouros	

Mrs. Leidlein called the meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

Item 1 – Public Participation

Michelle Ku, 28 Platts Hill Road, congratulated Dr. Robinson and said the children in Stratford are lucky. She has seen us through hard times and challenges and asked that she stay through the end of this school year. She hopes they look for an interim and permanent superintendent who have a strong vision for the district, will understand the unique needs of this community, continue to strive to the academic excellence we are known for, inspire each student to excel, and address the emotional needs of children. She asked that they look for the same qualities in the new principals used in hiring Mr. Geissler and Mrs. Hochsprung.

Michelle Assante, 16 Wendover Road, wished Dr. Robinson well and was sorry to lose her. She was a tremendous asset to the district and hoped she would be here until the end of the year. She was happy to get some guidance from Cabe but was concerned about the cost for the search. We need to spend whatever it takes to get a quality person. She was concerned that if we look within to promote someone it would leave another vacancy to fill.

Kevin Fitzgerald, 24 Old Farm Hill Road, has forwarded letters regarding unsubstantiated remarks against the superintendent but has not received any responses. He felt they would work on those unsubstantiated allegations and asked to put those on an agenda to address.

Item 2 – CABA Workshop

Bob Rader thanked the Board for asking him to attend the meeting. Their leadership will come in when the time is right. He complimented the district on how the incident was handled. There are outstanding offers of help.

He spoke about an interim superintendent and superintendent search. It takes 7 to 9 months to find a superintendent. An interim will allow a new superintendent to come in with a clean slate. It is usually a former superintendent. This person must have emotional intelligence, the ability to work with people, sensitivity and an understanding of what the community, board and staff needs. Interims are paid per diem, there are no fringe benefits, and sometimes transportation will be included. Anything else would be discussed. There should be 3 or 4 to interview.

Regarding a permanent superintendent, the decision has to be made on who will do the search. The Board can do it and set up a search committee or have a whole community search team which he didn't recommend. The more people involved the more chance there is of a leak or

problems if a recommended candidate is not accepted. It's also difficult if too many are on the committee. Consultants will do the clerical work involved but the board will decide the time parameters.

All meetings on the superintendent search are exempt from the Freedom of Information Act. Do as much as you can in open meetings regarding the process. When too much is done behind closed doors there are rumors. Interviews and talking about specific individuals can be done in closed session. You have to look at the superintendent's salary range and job description as you may want to change it. Newtown test scores are phenomenal and you want to keep that momentum going. Advertising has to be thought of in Education Week and a brochure should be developed. There also needs to be a process for selecting semifinalists. The consultants will screen applicants, meet with focus groups in the community, and prepare a report. There could also be town meetings and surveys. The search committee along with the superintendent will develop questions for the candidates. A Google search should be made for reference checks. After selecting a candidate that person would be taken around the community. There are also site visits. The board makes the final decision on an interim and permanent superintendent and it should come close to being unanimous.

Mr. Alexander asked the cost for consultants and said if we had an interim and a permanent search it could send us over the boundaries of a board election.

Mr. Rader said searches in Connecticut could run around \$20,000. A national search would run a little higher. Advertising may add another \$5,000. He provided a list of possible search firms. He suggested calling for a proposal and interview a few. Regarding going over the boundaries of a board election some outgoing boards have rushed to hire before that time but he feels filling this position should not be rushed.

Mr. Hart asked the status of the principal searches.

Dr. Robinson said we are currently advertising. Also, Education Week has given us a year of free advertising. Focus groups are being organized and we expect completion of the hiring before June to begin July 1.

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to go into executive session to discuss the superintendent's employment and the employment of an interim superintendent. Mr. Hart seconded.

Vote: 6 ayes

MOTION: Mr. Gaines moved to adjourn. Mr. Hart seconded. Vote: 6 ayes

Item 4 – Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Debbie Leidlein
Chair