

Select Board Special Meeting
Thursday January 31, 2019 - 7:00 p.m.
Longmeadow High School, Room A15, 535 Bliss Road, Longmeadow, MA

Present: Chair Mark Gold, Marie Angelides, Richard Foster, Thomas Lachusua, Richard Foster and William Low

Also Present: Town Manager Stephen Crane, Jackie Sullivan, Dianne Georgantas, Marty O'Shea, Thomas Mazza, School Committee members: Bronwyn Monahan, Ryan Kelly, (Armand Wray was absent), Applicants for the one School Committee vacancy: Larry Starr, Janet Robinson, James Ryan, Matthew Miranda, Timothy Mitchell, Jamie Hensch, Susan Bell and Jerold Duquette.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Select Board Chair Mark Gold.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mark Gold announced that there is just one item on the agenda, and that is to fill one of the vacancies on the School Committee to return them back to a quorum. Mark Gold gave a synopsis of what occurred since the last meeting. On Tuesday morning Mark Gold communicated with the Town Clerk to adjust the Annual Town Election Warrant to add three one-year terms to the School Committee. We are also advertising for positions to be filled on the School Committee using the appointment process, people can submit self-nomination papers that are due by February 21, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. Interviews are scheduled for February 25, 2019. This has been posted in accordance with State Law. Mr. Gold also noted that he has had several discussions with town counsel with regard to the process tonight.

New Business:

1. Fill A Vacancy on the School Committee

Mark Gold stated there have been several letters from people looking to fill the one vacancy tonight. There is no defined agreed upon either legal or town process for doing what they are doing tonight. Mr. Gold noted there is a process for appointing people, but they are not appointing someone they are filling a position. That is a distinction that needs to be made. There will not be interviews tonight.

Mark Gold announced the names of the people who submitted letters to be considered for the vacancy. The names are Larry Starr, Janet Robinson, James Ryan, Matthew Miranda, Timothy Mitchell, Jamie Hensch, Susan Bell and Jerold Duquette.

Public Comments: Mike Lieb of Barrington Rd. stated he is not familiar with the process of becoming a school committee member, is it an appointed position or elected? Mr. Lieb also stated that as a citizen he would like to request fair play and transparency and hopefully produce a product that is fair and equitable to everyone concerned. Mark Gold stated that normally the public comments are not a dialogue, but the question was pretty specific. There is no difference between being elected or appointed to the School Committee you're a school committee member regardless of being appointed or elected.

Larry Starr of 81 Williamsburg Drive stated that he has submitted his name to serve the town for this vacancy. Mr. Starr has spent 17 years on the High School Council was co-chair of the long-range plan, served on the district learning team, the technology team, he was co-chair of the Water and Sewer Task Force. He has been involved in campaigns for the School Committee. Mr. Starr believes that he would be able to bring a calming nature to the Board.

Jerold Duquette of 69 Clairmont St. stated he is very pleased to see there are several names on the list, his intention was to fill the seat for the 3 or 4 weeks to give the School Committee a quorum he is not interested in running for the office long term.

Jamie Hensch of 40 Eastham Lane stated that unlike Jerold he is interested in the short term and the long-term vacancy. Mr. Hensch has four little boys in the school system. He has a lot of financial background and is very comfortable with budgeting, by trade he is not an educator finance is his background.

Susan Bell of 157 Captain Rd has 3rd grader at Blueberry Hill and a soon to be kindergartner. Ms. Bell is very interested in the short term and the midterm position on the School Committee. Has 17 years of experience in education most recently as Superintendent in Windsor Locks CT. Primary reason for wanting to serve on the committee is to provide some stability during this transition. Has been involved in numerous contract negotiations and has prepared and presented budgets. Ms. Bell would really like to focus on what policy work needs to be done, procurement of a sound educational budget. Currently serves on the School Council at Blueberry Hill School and is on the Board of Directors at Longmeadow Montessori school.

James Ryan of 117 Crescent Rd. stated that he has sat before this panel before. He is an educator and in the past was a chairman of a county wide board with a constituency of about a million people.

Mark Gold thanked the eight people who put their names in, and whatever happens tonight he strongly encourages them to put their name on the list for the February 25th interviews. These are all very strong candidates.

William Low stated that whoever is selected is going to be asked to sign a resignation letter upon being sworn in. If anyone here won't do that then maybe they should bow out. Richard Foster feels they have no authority to make someone sign a resignation letter, they were possibly in error with what they proposed at the last meeting. Tom Lachiusa stated they are in a situation that is pretty unusual and the original motion at the last meeting was to name someone for a period of time, based on the letters that were received in he got the impression that people were willing to serve for that short period of time. Tom feels strongly that we continue with the short-term appointment. Mark Gold informed everyone that after extensive discussions with Town Counsel and indirectly with the Attorney Generals Office the law says that appointments are until the next election, however the Select Board may choose to put a condition on that appointment. Which might say they would appoint someone conditionally upon them agreeing to sign in advance a letter of resignation. That may or may not be subject to some challenge.

Marie Angelides stated that since it was announced to the community that we were not going to do an interview process and that were only going to appoint for a short term to turn around now and change it to a four-month appointment would not be fair. Marie feels that we should leave it the way it is as a short-term appointment. Bronwyn Monahan agrees with Tom and Marie it was already decided publicly to do the short-term appointment. Ryan Kelly stated that the idea behind the motion last meeting was to be as transparent as possible, he would like to stick with the original plan. Richard Foster believes the decision they made was flawed, Mr. Foster firmly believes there is a different way to handle this and regrets participating in the motion.

The characteristics that Marie Angelides is looking for is someone who has experience and understands the budgetary process and has knowledge of what the School Committee, the Select Board and The Finance Committee does. Ryan Kelly stated the characteristics he is looking for is someone who has knowledge of how schools work from top to bottom, and how School Committees work. Mr. Kelly feels it is important to have someone with experience and not have a learning curve. Bronwyn Monahan stated it is important to have to have someone with experience with what the School Committee does, someone who is a good communicator and collaborator, someone who is looking to move the schools forward. Mark Gold stated that he is focused on the budget, the school's control \$36,000,000.00 of the towns \$67,000,000.00 budget. Mr. Gold is looking for someone who will be able to delve into the budget, understand the budget and ask pertinent and probing questions.

Tom Lachiusa made a motion that they appoint Janet Robinson for the term and bring the School Committee back to a quorum. Bill Low seconded the motion.

Mark Gold advised them that this motion is not in compliance with their prior agreement.

*Tom Lachiusa made an amendment to the motion; the amended motion is to place Janet Robinson on the School Committee contingent upon her submitting a resignation letter to the Town Clerk. **Mark Gold suspended the vote, so they could discuss which date that the resignation letter should read.***

Janet Robinson of Canterbury Lane asked if she could address the Board, Mark Gold informed her yes. Ms. Robinson stated that she is flattered that they are wishing to appoint her but in her letter of intent she had requested that they reconsider the length of the appointment, her reason being is she feels as though a four-week appointment would not give someone enough time to get up to speed to make informed decisions. If the appointment is only going to be for four or five weeks she is going to have to respectfully decline and withdraw her name from consideration.

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3/4/19 Accepted

Tom Lachiusa withdrew his motion.

Ryan Kelly made a motion to place Susan Bell on the School Committee contingent upon her submitting a resignation letter effective February 22, 2019 to the Town Clerk prior to being sworn in. Bronwyn Monahan seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Richard Foster- Abstained, Marie Angelides – Yes, Bronwyn Monahan – Yes, Mark Gold – Yes, Tom Lachiusa – Yes, Ryan Kelly -Yes, William Low – Yes. The vote was 6 in favor 0 opposed and 1 abstention.

Mark Gold thanked everyone who submitted their names and go through this very public process. Mr. Gold also noted the next step beginning on February 25, 2019 is to fill four positions on the School Committee they will do that by a policy and procedure which has been adopted by the School Committee and the Select Board. Mark Gold strongly encourages everyone who applied tonight to reapply. The vote system does require a majority vote. The applications are due at the Town Clerks office by Thursday February 21, 2019 at 12:00 p.m. The interview process begins on Monday February 25, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.

Tom Lachiusa made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ryan Kelly seconded the motion. The vote was 7 in favor 0 opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jackie Sullivan

Documents: Agenda, Letters to be considered for the short-term School Committee Vacancy from James Ryan, Jamie Hensch, Janet Robinson, Larry Starr, Matthew Miranda, Susan Bell, W Timothy Mitchell, Jerold Duquette.