



Mission Statement

Our mission is to inspire in each student a joy and passion for learning and a commitment to excellence, personal integrity, and social responsibility.

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
AVON BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**AVON HIGH SCHOOL
Avon Community Room
Wednesday, November 8, 2017—7:00 p.m.**

Attendance

Members Present: Ken Birk; Deb Chute; Jason Indomenio; Houston Putnam Lowry; Peggy Roell; Jay Spivak; Laura Young; Kathy Zirolli

Member(s) Absent: Jackie Blea

Administration Present: Dr. JeanAnn C. Paddyfote, Interim Superintendent; Heather Michaud, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Dr. Kimberly Mearman, Director of Pupil Services; Dr. Donna Nestler-Rusack, Assistant Superintendent

Also in Attendance: David Cavanaugh; Jeffrey Fleischman; Bogdan Oprica

I. **Call to order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Houston Putnam Lowry at 7:03 pm.

Chair Lowry also distributed information regarding the Nov. 17-18 CABA/CAPSS Convention. Any Board member wishing to attend please contact Shirley Moy in the Superintendent's Office.

II. **Results of Superintendent Search**

Chair Lowry invited superintendent search consultant, Dr. Joe Erardi, to give an update of what has occurred in the search, his findings and plans on moving forward with the search.

Dr. Erardi distributed at the meeting a review of an executive summary highlighting his findings from the various meetings and survey results. He shared the following:

- A. In the last two and half months, 24 meetings were held and over 700 faculty, staff and community members either attended one of the meetings, completed a survey or spoke directly to him.
- B. Over 300 surveys were completed with the majority coming from parents with small children.
- C. The community expressed the following skills as essential for the new superintendent:
 1. Someone who will think strategically for K-12 students
 2. Someone who is sharp in the political and fiscal frame
 3. To have an effective and understood communication protocol – superintendent to all stakeholders
 4. To find a distributive leader who understands the need for autonomy but understand that the part must work as a whole
 5. Someone who is a visionary leader; one who is proactive in decision making
 6. To find a school leader who will be here a very long time

- D. The reoccurring requested character traits the next superintendent possesses are:
 - 1. Honesty
 - 2. Caring
 - 3. Trust
 - 4. Bright/intelligent
 - 5. Enthusiastic/genuine/sense of humor
- E. The greatest successes with the Avon district are:
 - 1. The community believes the Avon Public School system is in a very good place and are most proud of the students who graduates from the school experience.
 - 2. A very strong staff
 - 3. Depth of opportunity and experiences offered to students
 - 4. The partnership of the Avon community and Avon Public Schools working in harmony for the students
 - 5. Avon Public Schools is a safe and nurturing environment
- F. The greatest challenges with the Avon district are:
 - 1. The fiscal concerns of both state and local money
 - 2. The retention of administrators and teachers
 - 3. Meeting the needs of all students including those who do not want to pursue higher education after graduation
 - 4. Trying to understand the level of need for school counselor, social worker and/or school psychologist
 - 5. A consistency in behavioral conduct particularly at the secondary schools
- G. In addition, people are hoping the new superintendent:
 - 1. Along with the Board members, have a clear and meaningful understanding of their respective roles
 - 2. Is committed to the Avon community
 - 3. Is visible at school and community events
 - 4. Can retain, lead and inspire the current APS staff
 - 5. Has strong communication skills
 - 6. Be willing to observe the district in action before implementing any substantive change until after this year's graduation (as requested by AHS students)
 - 7. Has a personal credo and an inner strength to always do what is right for children
 - 8. Will embrace parents as partners
 - 9. Never lose sight of what is best for the children

Questions and Comments

- A. Chair Lowry stated that in the past the academic title was not important, not requiring candidates to possess a Ph.D., has that changed? Dr. Erardi stated that was not a requirement but suggests the Board pay attention to transcripts and degrees.
- B. Chair Lowry also commented that superintendents seem to fall into 1 of 2 categories – they have an emphasis on fiscal/budgeting skills or an emphasis on curriculum skills. Is there any one type of candidate we should be looking for in preference to one instead of the other? Dr. Erardi shared that the applicant pool is rich and the candidates that will be suggested are cross connected as strong fiscal leaders and strong instructional leaders.
- C. Mr. Spivak asked if it was necessary to find someone who has served in the role as superintendent. Dr. Erardi stated that he thought it very difficult for some to leap from a site level position to a superintendent level. The recommendations Dr. Erardi will bring are all central office level candidates.

- D. Mr. Birk asked if the position was marketed beyond Connecticut, to which Dr. Erardi replied there were 7 applicants from different states with some as far as Washington and Arizona. Chair Lowry confirmed that he has requested Dr. Erardi conduct a nationwide search.
- E. Mrs. Chute asked how many application were received, how were they vetted in deciding which ones will be seen and how will Board members be given access to the applicants' information. Dr. Erardi stated there were 31 people who inquired about applying and 25 who completed the application. In an upcoming meeting (not a Board meeting), lists will be provided by Dr. Erardi indicating those he recommends Board consideration and a list of those he does not recommend. Dr. Erardi is confident in the original timeline of taking action in the selection of the next superintendent prior to the December break. Chair Lowry confirmed that he has reviewed the actions with Dr. Erardi of prevetting the list of applicants and having Dr. Erardi present eight candidates for interviews. The actual list of candidates to be interviewed can be changed by the superintendent search committee (comprised of current Board members and newly elected Board members). Chair Lowry stated the charge to the committee is to conduct interviews and make a recommendation to the Board. The search committee does not bind the Board.
- F. Mrs. Chute referenced past search committees where interview questions were scripted and assigned prior to the interviews. Dr. Erardi replied that he has constructed 30 interview questions based on community input as suggestions to be used, or not, during the interviews. However, Dr. Erardi stressed the importance of replicating the process and questions for each interview. Chair Lowry stated that the process will be similar to the process used when interviewing for the interim superintendent where each Board member is understood to ask the same questions to each candidate.
- G. Ms. Zirolli would like to read the survey comments. Dr. Erardi said they would be provided.
- H. Chair Lowry asked Interim Superintendent, Dr. Paddyfote, if she had anything to add to the process. Dr. Paddyfote stated that the process seemed like a solid one and hoped that the candidate chosen would have superintendent experience dealing with budgets, curriculum, and all aspects of the job as it would be very important in bringing necessary things forward.

III. Add Newly Elected Members of the BOE to the Search Committee

Chair Lowry stated that the superintendent search committee is a committee established by vote with the intention to conduct the interviewing process which will take place until the end of the calendar year as committees are reformed and reappointed at the beginning of the year. The committee will comprise of the current Board members who are already appointed and the three newly elected members, Mr. Oprica, Mr. Fleischman and Mr. Cavanaugh. This will allow the committee the experience of exiting Board members while also giving opportunity for new Board members to know the superintendent selected. The committee is allowed "non-meetings." Each Board committee cannot make line action but makes recommendations to the Board. It is hoped the timing of the selection will be before the end of the year. Sixty to ninety days must be given to the new superintendent to allow him/her to give adequate notice at his/her current place of employment. This will also address the issue of how many days the current interim superintendent is allowed to work due to her retirement.

Questions and Comments

- A. Ms. Young asked Chair Lowry to clarify whether it was through state statutes or Board bylaws that newly elected Board members are not legally bound until January 1st to which Chair Lowry confirmed that newly elected Board members do not take the oath of office until January 1st. Ms. Young asked the Chair to explain the process of who will actually be voting on the various candidates and the process. Chair Lowry explained that each superintendent search committee member will be allowed one vote which then becomes a recommendation to the full Board. Each member of the full Board will have one vote in making the final decision. The full Board is not

bound by the search committee's recommendation. The Board moves by consensus. It is assumed the newly elected Board members understand the confidential nature of the process.

- B. Ms. Zirolli encouraged newly elected Board members to become familiar with the Board policies, especially the bylaws in the 9000 series. She stated that due to inaccuracies circulated during the past few months, it is important to understand our bylaws which follow state statutes. In particular, Policy 9322 states the various types of meetings the Board of Education may hold and the various reasons for having meetings.

Chair Lowry officially appointed Mr. Cavanaugh, Mr. Fleischman and Mr. _____ to the Oprica superintendent's search committee.

IV. Executive Session

- A. Discussion concerning confidential documents related to collective bargaining with the secretaries.
- B. Possible action concerning ratification of a proposed successor collective bargaining agreement with the secretaries.

Chairperson Houston Putnam Lowry, by unanimous consent, moved to enter into Executive Session at 7:35 pm. to discuss confidential documents related to collective bargaining with the secretaries and to invite in Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote and Mrs. Heather Michaud.

The Board returned to public session at 7:42 pm.

Motion made by Peggy Roell and seconded by Deb Chute to approve the Avon Educational Support Personnel contract retroactive from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2020. The new contract represents a total cost increase to the Board as follows: Year 1 – 2.24% (GWI=1.25%); Year 2 – 2.27% (GWI=1.25%); Year 3 – 2.23% (GWI=1.10%). The total cost increase is 6.74%. Additionally, the Avon Educational Support Personnel will be migrating to an HSA beginning July 1, 2018.

The motion passed 8-0-0.

V. Adjournment

Peggy Roell motioned, by unanimous consent, to adjourn at 7:45 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by Shirley Moy, Board Recording Secretary
Minutes Respectfully Submitted by Kathy Zirolli, Board Secretary

*Katharine F. Zirolli
November 10, 2017*