

MINUTES OF THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD
SPECIAL MEETING OF FEBRUARY 14, 2009
REVISED

The Anchorage School Board met in Special Session on Saturday, February 14, 2009, at 1:30 p.m. in the Board Room, at the Anchorage School District Administration Building. President, Jeff Friedman, presided.

A. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, FLAG SALUTE, Jeff Friedman Presiding

Board Members Present: Jeff Friedman, Crystal Kennedy, Pat Higgins, Macon Roberts, Tim Steele and John Steiner.

Others Present: Carol Comeau, Johanna Lee, the press, and other interested people.

B. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

C. SELECTION OF SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

Mr. Friedman presented an overview of the process that will be followed as candidates are interviewed and an appointment is made.

Mr. Friedman declared that one candidate has filed to run for Seat F which is the same seat that he is seeking re-election for. He felt that there might be a potential conflict so he wanted other board members to have the opportunity to discuss this in case someone felt that he should be recused.

Mr. Steele asked Mr. Friedman whether he believed he could be unbiased in his voting. Mr. Friedman indicated that he believed that he could.

Mr. Roberts indicated his belief that Mr. Friedman would be able to conduct this process in an unbiased manner. He believed that Mr. Friedman should participate in this appointment process.

Mr. Steiner clarified that in this process a candidate must have at least four votes in order to proceed. If Mr. Friedman were excused from voting there would only be five board members left and the candidates would

still require four votes so his not voting would not have any influence on the number of votes necessary. A negative vote would not have any greater impact than not voting at all. Mr. Friedman agreed with that assessment but added that his discussion during the meeting might sway the votes of other members. Mr. Steiner noted that the question then becomes whether the question of conflict would relate to just voting on that particular candidate or voting for the entire seat. Mr. Friedman felt that if board members felt that he had a conflict he should not be involved in the procedure at all.

MOTION:

Moved by: Pat Higgins
Seconded by: Macon Roberts

That Mr. Friedman be allowed to participate and vote in the proceedings for the candidate selection.

Mr. Steiner observed that it would be inappropriate to exclude Mr. Friedman from the entire proceedings because it is quite possible that if that candidate were not to proceed through one round or the other then Mr. Friedman would be eligible to vote thereafter. Therefore Mr. Steiner did not feel that it was appropriate to exclude him entirely. The question is whether Mr. Friedman would have a conflict as long as that candidate remains in the process. It seemed to Mr. Steiner that he would. Mr. Steiner indicated that he would not support a requirement that Mr. Friedman vote and that he would find a conflict as long as that candidate remains in the applicant pool.

VOTE on MOTION:

Ayes: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Steele

Nays: Steiner

Abstain: Friedman

MOTION PASSED

The meeting continued with the Applicant Statements. Each of the applicants were allowed two minutes to present a prepared statement and then asked to respond to three questions that they had each received prior to the start of the meeting.

The applicants proceeded through the presentations in the following order: Mr. Christopher E. Gunderson, Ms. Lindsay Williams, Mr. Joel Wieman, Ms. Kathleen A. Plunkett, Mr. Hamid I. Nasir, Ms. Jody Smith, Mr. William P.H. Nye, Ms. Dawn F. Bundick, Ms. Starr Marsett, Mr.

Richard B. Foster, Mr. Marc Grober, Mr. Steve Pratt, Mr. Daniel F. Garcia, Mr. Stephen P. Johnston, Mr. James LaBelle, Jr., Ms. Kimberly Singleton, Ms. Mia Costello, Mr. David T. Boyle, Mr. Ronald Brown, Ms. Emily L. Waters, Mr. Brain Horschel, Ms. Bobby Jo Kramer, Mr. Michael C. Lindbeck, Mr. Gregg E. Knutsen, Ms. Jeannie M. Mackie, Ms. Valerie Baffone, Ms. Marilyn Stewart, and Ms. Michelle Quier.

Following the applicant presentations the meeting went into a ten minute recess at 3:55 p.m. and was called back to order at 4:05 p.m.

Each applicant was given the opportunity for a one-minute recap in order to add anything to their testimony before the board began voting on the appointment. The applicants who wanted to add to their testimony proceeded in the opposite order than they had previously testified.

Mr. Steele noted that, regardless of the appointment made at this time, it is ultimately the voters who will select who will serve. He reminded everyone that three members of the current board went through this same appointment procedure to fill seat vacancies and none of them were appointed. They each were ultimately chosen by the voters during the regular election cycle.

Mr. Higgins voiced his appreciation to each of the applicants for their desire to serve and their willingness to go through this selection process. He encouraged each of the applicants, regardless of the selection made today, to stay involved in the education system as each one has demonstrated that they have something to offer that could positively impact student success.

Ms. Kennedy wished each of the applicants that will continue on to seek election to the open school board seats the very best of luck during their campaigns.

Mr. Steiner explained that one of his thought processes had been to appoint someone only for the interim. In other words, vote only for someone who was not running for the seat during the election. By doing that the current board would not have stated a position on the race to come. Ultimately, however, he determined that the responsibility of current board members is to make a decision based on who they believe would do the best job and, realistically, there is very little impact that can be made by an individual who is only able to serve for the next two months. It takes a while just to get up to speed and to get a good understanding of the decisions that need to be made. Mr. Steiner noted

that whether an applicant will be running in the April election really should be considered at some point during the selection process.

The board went into a brief recess at 4:37 p.m. and was called back to order at 4:44 p.m.

Ms. Kennedy brought up the fact that the board has been discussing an idea in Policy Subcommittee that, in cases like this where there are a significant number of applicants, board members should limit themselves to a certain number of votes. According to current policy each board member can vote for as many applicants as they choose. While noting that current policy does not make any restriction she, personally, was going to limit herself to voting for no more than about one-third of the applicants during the first round.

Mr. Friedman also noted that he was also going to try to be very selective early in the process. He realized that he would have to make the hard decision and vote no on someone that he believes would be a good board member at some point because a choice will ultimately have to be made. He did note, however, that there is value in letting some applicants get to the second stage so that more questions can be asked and more in-depth information can be gathered.

Mr. Steiner indicated that one advantage of putting a limit on the number of votes that each board member can give is that other applicants are then aware that not receiving a vote from any particular board member was not a reflection on their ability or worth. Mr. Steiner made a motion that board members limit themselves to voting for no more than two-thirds of the applicants on the first round. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Mr. Steiner noted that there are a number of people who are not running for election in April which would allow them only a very short term of service. It was his opinion that even though these applicants have much to offer they will not have an opportunity to be as effective in the short term. He indicated that he would be using that criteria as part of his decision making and would not be voting for any applicants that would not be running for a seat during the April election.

Mr. Friedman noted that his original thought had been to not vote for applicants who would not be running in April because of the long learning curve. His belief is that it takes a good year for new board members to get thoroughly up to speed. Given how many good people are in the election for the open seats and that the chances that the current

board will select the individual that the voters will ultimately put into office are very slim, Mr. Friedman felt that whether applicants are running in the election is less of an issue for him.

Each applicant was voted on in the same order that they gave their presentations. Board members will vote yes or no on each candidate. In order to move the second round a candidate must receive four yes votes.

Christopher E. Gunderson:

Ayes: None
Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Friedman,
Steele, Steiner

Candidate received no votes.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Lindsay Williams:

Ayes: Friedman
Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Steele, Steiner

Candidate received one vote.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Joel Wieman, PhD:

Ayes: Roberts
Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Friedman, Steele, Steiner

Candidate received one vote.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Kathleen A. Plunkett:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steiner,
Steele
Nays: Higgins, Roberts,
Friedman

Candidate received three votes.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Hamid I. Nasir:

Ayes: Friedman
Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,

Roberts, Steele, Steiner

Candidate received one vote.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Jody Smith:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steele,
Steiner

Nays: Higgins, Roberts,
Friedman,

Candidate received three votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

William P.H. Nye:

Ayes: Steiner

Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Friedman,
Steele

Candidate received one vote.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Dawn F. Bundick:

Ayes: Higgins, Steiner

Nays: Kennedy, Roberts,
Friedman, Steele

Candidate received two votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Starr Marsett:

Ayes: Friedman

Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Steele, Steiner

Candidate received one vote.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Richard B. Foster:

Ayes: None

Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Friedman,
Steele, Steiner

Candidate received no votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Marc Grober:

Ayes: None

Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Friedman,
Steele, Steiner

Candidate received no votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Steve Pratt:

Ayes: Kennedy, Friedman,
Steiner

Nays: Higgins, Roberts,
Steele

Candidate received three votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Daniel F. Garcia:

Ayes: Roberts

Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Friedman, Steele, Steiner

Candidate received one vote.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Stephen P. Johnston:

Ayes: Friedman

Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Steele, Steiner

Candidate received one vote.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

James LaBelle, Jr.:

Ayes: Higgins, Roberts,
Steiner, Steele

Nays: Kennedy, Friedman

Candidate received four votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: PASSED

Kimberly Singleton:

Ayes: None
Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Friedman,
Steele, Steiner

Candidate received no votes.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Mia Costello:

Ayes: Kennedy, Roberts,
Friedman, Steele, Steiner
Nays: Higgins
Candidate received five votes.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: PASSED

David T. Boyle:

Ayes: Kennedy, Steiner
Nays: Higgins, Roberts,
Friedman, Steele
Candidate received two votes.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Ronald Brown:

Ayes: None
Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Friedman,
Steele, Steiner
Candidate received no votes.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Emily L. Waters.:

Ayes: Higgins, Roberts,
Steiner
Nays: Kennedy, Friedman,
Steele
Candidate received three votes.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Brian Horschel:

Ayes: Steiner
Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Friedman, Steele
Candidate received one vote.
Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Bobby Jo Kramer:

Ayes: Higgins, Friedman,
Steiner

Nays: Kennedy, Roberts,
Steele

Candidate received three votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Michael C. Lindbeck.:

Ayes: Steiner

Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Friedman, Steele

Candidate received one vote.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Gregg E. Knutsen.:

Ayes: Kennedy

Nays: Higgins, Roberts,
Friedman, Steele, Steiner

Candidate received one vote.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

Jeannie M. Mackie.:

Ayes: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Friedman,
Steele, Steiner

Nays: None

Candidate received six votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: PASSED

Valerie Baffone:

Ayes: Kennedy, Higgins,
Roberts, Steiner, Steele

Nays: Friedman

Candidate received five votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: PASSED

Marilyn Stewart:

Ayes: Kennedy, Roberts,
Steiner, Steele

Nays: Higgins, Friedman

Candidate received four votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: PASSED

Michelle Quier:

Ayes: Kennedy, Roberts,
Steiner

Nays: Higgins, Friedman,
Steele

Candidate received three votes.

Vote to Proceed to Next Round: FAILED

The applicants that were voted through to the second round of consideration were Mr. James LaBelle, Jr., Ms. Mia Costello, Ms. Jeannie M. Mackie, Ms. Valerie Baffone, and Ms. Marilyn Stewart.

Mr. Steiner voiced his concern that a candidate that is appointed to one seat but is running for a different seat in the election could cause confusion to voters as to how the seats are aligned. He indicated that he was considering using that as a means to further refine his choices.

Mr. Higgins noted that this meeting was being held after the filing deadline. In fairness to all the candidates, it did not seem appropriate to him to use which seat candidates are seeking in the April election as a criteria for appointment. The board's goal is to select a candidate. Whether they are able to extend that term or not will be up to the voters. Mr. Higgins asked each of the candidates what they would like to see accomplished during their presumed three year tenure on the board. Each of the five candidates was given the opportunity to respond.

Mr. Steele noted that this is the point in the process becomes very difficult. He stated that, without exception, any of the remaining applicants would be good board members.

Mr. Steele noted that Ms. Baffone had run for public office in the past and asked her if she viewed the school board as a stepping stone to other opportunities. Ms. Baffone indicated that the board position is something that she is very serious about and that she absolutely does not consider the position a stepping stone. She noted that she feels a strong commitment to serve the community in a policy-making body.

With no further questions from board members the second round of voting commenced.

James LaBelle, Jr.:

Ayes: Higgins

Nays: Kennedy, Roberts,
Friedman, Steiner,
Steele

Candidate received one vote.

Mia Costello:

Ayes: Kennedy, Friedman,
Steiner, Steele

Nays: Higgins, Roberts

Candidate received four votes.

Jeannie M. Mackie:

Ayes: Kennedy, Roberts,
Friedman, Steiner, Steele

Nays: Higgins

Candidate received five votes.

Valerie Baffone:

Ayes: Higgins, Roberts,
Steele

Nays: Kennedy, Friedman,
Steiner

Candidates received three votes.

Marilyn Stewart:

Ayes: Roberts, Steiner

Nays: Kennedy, Higgins,
Friedman, Steele

Candidate received two votes.

With only one individual receiving five votes there was a prevailing applicant. Ms. Jeannie M. Mackie was selected to fill School Board Seat B.

Ms. Comeau announced the times and dates that the meeting would be rebroadcast on Channel 14.

Board members extended their thanks to each of the applicants and wished those running for the school board in the upcoming election the best of luck.

C. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Meeting of February 14, 2009 was adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:26 p.m.

Jeff Friedman, President

Crystal Kennedy, Clerk

Johanna Lee, Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approve