

July 10, 2019

**WILLINGBORO TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, July 10, 2019**

The Board Meeting of the Willingboro Board of Education was held on Wednesday, July 10, 2019 in the Professional Development Room of the Country Club Administration Building. The meeting was called to order by Board President Dennis Tunstall at 6:36 PM.

The opening statement was read as follows:

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, this is to announce that adequate notice of this meeting has been satisfied.

On July 1, 2019 advanced written notice of this meeting was posted on the bulletin board outside the Board Secretary's Office.

On July 1, 2019 advanced written notice of this meeting was emailed to the Courier Post, 301 Cuthbert Blvd., Cherry Hill, the Trenton Times, 413 Riverview Plaza, Trenton, NJ and Burlington County Times 4284 US Route 130, Willingboro, NJ.

On July 1, 2019 advanced written notice of this meeting was filed with the Township Clerk.

The Board Secretary shall enter into the minutes of this meeting, this public announcement.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A roll call resulted as follows:

Tonya Brown	-	Absent	Kimbrali Davis	-	Absent
Laurie-Gibson-Parker	-	Present	Alexis Harkley	-	Present
Gary Johnson	-	Absent	Debra Williams	-	Present
Carlos Worthy	-	Present	Grover McKenzie	-	Present
Dennis Tunstall	-	Present			
9 Members	6	Present	3	Absent	

Davis arrived @

Administrators Present: Dr. Michael Kozak, Interim Superintendent, Kelvin L. Smith, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Afshan Aimiri-Guner, Board Attorney/Solicitor .

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APPROVAL OF DRAFT AGENDA

Be it resolved that the Willingboro Board of Education approves the following draft agenda.

Moved by Grover McKenzie

APPROVAL OF DRAFT AGENDA

Seconded by Carlos Worthy

A roll call resulted as follows:

Laurie Gibson-Parker	-	Yes	Alexis Harkley	-	Yes
Debra Williams	-	Yes	Carlos Worthy	-	Yes
Grover McKenzie	-	Yes	Dennis Tunstall	-	Yes

6 Voting: 6 Affirmatives, 0 Negatives, 0 Abstentions

MOTION PASSED

BOARD MEETING COMMENTS

Board President's Statement

Often times it may appear to members of our audience that the Board of Education takes action with very little comment and in many cases a unanimous vote. Before a matter is placed on the agenda at a public meeting, the administration has thoroughly reviewed the matter with the Superintendent of Schools/Chief School Administrator (CSA). If the Superintendent of Schools/Chief School Administrator is satisfied that the matter is ready to be presented to the Board of Education, it is then referred to the appropriate board committee. The members of the board committee work with administration and the Superintendent to assure that the members fully understand the matter. When the committee is satisfied with the matter, it is presented to the Board of Education for discussion before any final action is taken. Only then, is it placed on the agenda for action at a public meeting.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT:

Dr. Michael Kozak:

- Welcome and good evening. Bring attention to board and public some of the things seen my first couple of days.
- Was able to visit the schools and happy to inform you that they are in good shape. With summer going on you have cleaning going on and furniture in the hallways but the custodians and matrons are working very hard to make sure buildings are clean and the grounds are looking good. They are making any necessary repairs that need to be done.
- The administration, teachers and staff who are in during the summer are also working very hard to prepare schools for the 2019-2020 school year. Everyone I have met and most of the administrators have been extremely friendly and helpful and I certainly appreciate it coming in. Any questions I may have had they have been answered.
- The Summer Bridge Program and Extended School Year Program up and running and students are engaged in learning and students are happy. Teachers are keeping students involved and doing great things with them.

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INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT (cont'd):

- Parent had a concern about how to register her child for the upcoming school year. Made a modification to the website and posted on front which is easy to find and read.
- Meetings set up for next week to keep the positive momentum that's been going on by Dr. Taylor and others and we want to keep that going moving forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT OPENED @ 6:43 P.M.:

Pattesee Harvey – 12 Haddon Lane:

- Welcomed Dr. Kozak to the district. I hope that your time here you will be engaging with the public. I see on the agenda you will be talking about the superintendent search and I hope the board will be engaging with the public so we can have a say on what we would like to see in the superintendent.

April Maxwell-Henley – 30 Helm Turn:

- Look into revising the curriculum. It's not working for our students nor is it working for our school district. Please revisit and revamp the grading policy which isn't working either.
- Seek out the community for their involvement and input. Keep them informed with what's going on in the schools and how they can assist in moving the district forward.
- Think we need to remove some of the top heavy positions and use the salaries to add more books into the classrooms. Every school should have a media specialist or school library. This is something that shouldn't be non-negotiable. This past school year Memorial went without having a librarian. The PTA took charge and ran the book fair so the students could participate.
- Would like to go back to basic skills to help special education students. The curriculum doesn't help them. We need to meet them on level where they are. Son is a special education student so I'm a big advocate for that.
- Think we need to seek advice from experts who deal specifically with emotional and social behavior. Don't think the guidance counselors are equipped to handle it. Maybe can use additional training, this is only my personal opinion.

Kia Collier – 39 Lighten Lane, Mt. Laurel, NJ –WEA President:

- Wanted to thank you for being visible right away.
- Noted that one of the things that the board did was had Dr. Taylor meet with the WEA monthly and would like to mention there is a meeting tomorrow.

Charlese Taylor – 57 Buck Hollow Lane:

- I am a former Warrior of the high school. Not new to area but new to school board concept. I have an invested interested with my child being a part of the school district.
- Would like to make sure certain things are covered. With the previous superintendent there was some issues so I want to make sure you're transparent with your intensions and that the residents know what's going on prior to it happening, (schools closing, staff being let go, etc.).

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PUBLIC COMMENT (cont'd):

- Listen to the students and take a look at the surrounding schools and see how they're thriving. Take a look at curriculum.
- We are requiring more from the educators and with higher standards and expectations we expect it to reflect the high salaries that the administrators are making.
- I'm hoping that you bring a positive experience and communication as well.

Harry Walker – Garfield East:

- What is an Interim Superintendent and how does this process work and how the new township manager in your role, what is the process?

SUPERINTENDENT COMMENTS:

- Dr. Kozak thanked parents and community members who spoke.
- Heard a couple of things that jumped out. Lot of communication with community. This can be accomplished with online news letters and other ways to get information out to the public.
- Transparency can be accomplished two ways. Putting out information and receiving information from parents and community leaders and respond in a quickly manner. Can't promise it will always happen this way depending on the situation but will try to handle in a timely manner.
- Concerns about curriculum and instruction. Already have a meeting set up with administrators to start looking at student data. Would like to continue the progress that has been started in the district. It's a never ending process, constantly moving on to improve the delivery of instruction and education for children. Kids get one shot in each grade and want it to be the best experience possible. Whether it be the media specialist or the curriculum being offered or type of programs. I will be addressing them with the administrators to see if they are effective, and what evidence we have they are effective and can we improve. There's no one way to fix a problem, it's usually a multiply approach. Will look at all the different ways because not everything works for every child. Our job is to help that child whether it's academically, behaviorally if need, socially and emotionally.
- Talked about positive staff and what's needed for improvement.

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS:

Debra Williams:

- Would like to address Ms. Henley about her concerns with the reading programs. Ms. Williams discussed a new program that is used specifically to meet students where they are. It was implemented a few years ago and come September will be the third year. We don't expect teachers to be perfect because it takes 5 to 6 years to master curriculum but it is our expectation that everyone is using the program. We need to know if teachers are transitioning into using the program and if not it should be addressed. Some accountability should be taken, something that has been lapsed for a long time now. I know it's hard to change from doing something you have been doing for so long, but when we brought this in it was understood that everyone would be using it.
- This program is designed for teachers to meet with small groups. You can have 45 fifth graders but not all reading on same level and that's what the program is designed for.

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BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS (cont'd):

Kimbrali Davis:

- I appreciate seeing so many people coming out and welcome Dr. Kozak to the first board meeting as Interim Superintendent.
- One of the questions that stood out was explain what an interim superintendent does and their function is an excellent question.
- There are three things that are the responsibility of the board to oversee directly, would be policies, budget and hiring of Superintendent. As board members we do not take it lightly, so the decision to appoint an Interim Superintendent was made so we would rush in hiring the new Superintendent. Give us time to work with. Dr. Taylor was with us for 8 years and a lot has been accomplished.
- Being on the board for seven years, I can tell you we are a whole lot further than where we were. Where do we go from here and how do we develop the profile for the next Superintendent to get us where we need to go.
- The hope is for the interim who has served as an superintendent with experience in other districts help us come up with recommendations on how to move forward and how we do what's best for our children.
- Having two children who came through Willingboro School District, I'm very passionate about the children having everything they need and deserve.
- Having an interim will give us time to have stakeholder meetings, community, parents, teachers and administrators involved. It's going to take time and dedication and people sitting in the blue chairs to come when we reach out and understand where the data is telling us where we are and where we need to go from there. This is what I saw when looking to appoint an interim superintendent. I can't speak for everyone else but I can speak for me vision my passion and commitment to this school district. I don't take this role lightly and it was my advice not to rush into hiring a superintendent and do the search for us letting us know who's out there and what we need as a district.

Carlos Worthy:

- Welcomed Dr. Kozak to the district and commented on one of the points he made tonight regarding communication and how it requires giving and receiving. I believe the intent of board in moving forward in finding a superintendent is having community involvement and having the stakeholders be a part of the process to select a superintendent who meets our district's profile and not something we pull off line but have a customized model that meets our needs. So what I am asking going forward is that we have community participation and know it is absolutely essential that you participate.
- It was our decision as a board to get an interim superintendent so that we would have time to hire who we want and do it collectively as a board a not individually. When we say stakeholders that mean equal accountability and liability.
- When we talk to the search firm this evening who will be assisting us with this process we are very focused on having a community effort. Important that you talk to everyone and have them realize it's an opportunity to come back and participate in this process. Being aware gives us better decisions. Make us more accountable in participating in the process and we will do our best to fill this responsibility

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BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS (cont'd):

Grover McKenzie:

- Welcomed Dr. Kozak and thanked everyone for coming out tonight. Very appreciative of those who took the time out to speak and I'm most appreciated of that because the representative from the search firm who is going to help us can establish the parameters and process and help the board in moving forward to select a permanent superintendent and it helps him to hear some of the issues and concerns because several of them factor in to what stages the district is in.

INTERVIEW OF SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FIRM @ 7:09

- Presented by Carlos Worthy
- Explained to public how firm was selected
- Introduced Dr. William Adams of HYA Associates
 - Announced glad to be back in Willingboro. Was part of the hiring process with Dr. Taylor
 - Brief Biography
 - Discussion about involvement with longstanding Superintendents
 - Reviewed the packet hand outs
 - *Encourage Students
 - * Encourage Town Council
 - *Overview of Contract & Process
- Background Check by Investigation
- Discuss Phase Project
 - *1/2 hour interview with each Board Member
 - *Meeting with Board Members individually
- Asked about conflictual individuals
- Attorney spoke about conflicts stating every board members input is important
- Dr. Adams stated 2/3 of process is selecting candidates and the rest is involvement of stakeholders and community involvement
- Selection of internal contacts
- Advertisements/Direct Reach Outs
- Selection of advertising packages and recommendations
- Talked about initial engage phase 2 to 3 weeks after meeting with board
- After planning of meeting will start process with Focus Groups to put survey out
- Question about who develops survey questions? Replied that it is a research base survey but can be modified but at cost
- Talked about timing of Focus Groups and surveys and when they should start and how they interact with each other
- Usually information is taken from the focus groups, surveys, community meetings and individual interviews and come back to full board with input and make recommendation on what leadership characteristics should be but it's up to the board to accept, reject or modify based on what was provided
- Input Groups/Focus Groups and interviews don't drive what's on the surveys, the surveys are pre prepared survey
- It was asked if a survey could be prepared by need.
- Use a general survey in both English and Spanish all across the United States, and if you want a survey developed it will be a separate cost of \$5,000 because our research team would have to be involved

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INTERVIEW OF SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH FIRM (cont'd)

- You have the opportunity to address the needs of Willingboro very clearly with individual interviews that you get to determine and you tell us with the focus groups you tell us to meet with and any community meetings you ask us to attend, this information is taken along with the surveys and what you have is the best of both worlds, a research base survey which is general but at the same time input from focus groups that doesn't cost any additional money to conduct separate survey
- Once leadership profile is approved can start formal advertising for recruiting candidates and it can take anywhere from (30 to 60 days)
- Next conduct workshop with board and talk about community input at the next process
- Interview Process of Candidates
 - Six to eight candidates and provide full access to board members And ask enter into couple options on how to select interviews.
 - Use of the Delphi Technique shows you how to narrow candidates down
 - Narrowing down to Recommend 3 Candidates
 - Public Forum
 - Assist with Press Release of Final Candidates (can take anywhere from 3 to 8 months) depending on what board decides
- Question about the selection of the pool who recruits candidates, from the 8 to 10 potentials, what is the make-up and is it going to be only people your firm has an interest in, we don't know if you have a financial interest with them verses someone who just applies from the website
- Replied that they don't represent candidates and we work for the board of education, there is a national file of applicants around 14,000, but we rarely send out to selected applicants about a posting but we do put on our website all known searches of competitors and school board openings around the country. Do not accept fees from candidates. Usually in a private sector a fee can be charged.
- Explained to review applications is to narrow down to 1/3 of candidates and then work towards final 3 candidates. Those applicants who weren't chosen can be shared with the board and if they want to interview them it's a board decision.
- Will have access to leadership profile and applicants through a portal
- The board president asked about establishing a time line
- Engage Phase – Recommend a date to begin. A tentative date of 8/16/19 @ 6:00 was suggested and asked if Mr. Smith could do a poll of the board and advertise
- Discussion of time line and board president explained that if it takes a little longer it's okay, no one is locked in to anything
- Question of what is the district getting for the fees identified
- Replied fees are dictated in contract

MOTION MADE TO ALLOW ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR INTERVIEWS FOR SUPERINTENDENT’S SEARCH WITH A 30 MINUTES TIME LINE

Moved by Carlos Worthy

APPROVAL OF DRAFT AGENDA

Seconded by Kimbrali Davis
A roll call resulted as follows:

Kimbrali Davis	-	Yes	Laurie Gibson-Parker	-	Yes
Alexis Harkley	-	Yes	Debra Williams	-	Yes
Carlos Worthy	-	Yes	Grover McKenzie	-	No
Dennis Tunstall	-	Yes			

7 Voting: 6 Affirmatives, 1 Negative, 0 Abstentions

MOTION PASSED

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR SUPERINTENDENT’S SEARCH FIRM @ 8:10

Patricia Harvey

- Mentioned that she is concerned about this being the same search firm who brought in Dr. Taylor.
- Would like to see a superintendent who is committed to the community and thinks outside the box and has innovative ideas to move the district forward.

Cheryl Wood-Taylor – 57 Buck Hollow Lane:

- Asked if the Interim Superintendent was going to be an option?
- The presentation given seemed to be a good visual for the board because you had hand outs and materials. As a community member I’m asking during presentations can materials be given out to all. Nice little television behind you or enough paper materials for us to follow and have for the next presentation.

Ted Nixon – 50 Windover Lane:

- Looking for new superintendent is there a plan in hand with board on what you would like to see with superintendent’s accomplishments?
- Don’t have documentation for this, but it’s been my thoughts that the first thing that happens when a superintendent is interviewed, somehow we get to the point that we have to spend a million dollars on renovations on buildings to implement his plan.
- Have education background and seems to me board should have a plan in mind to find a superintendent to fulfill their plans instead of finding a superintendent who has brand new plans of their own.
- Board is in denial for some time regarding accomplishments made over an 8 year span. I spent time looking over data and couldn’t find great accomplishments that we said happened in the last few years.
- Spending millions of dollars on renovations and educational piece is missing.
- Would like to submit recommendation on my thoughts.

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PUBLIC COMMENT FOR SUPERINTENDENT’S SEARCH FIRM (cont’d)

William Weston – 44 Barnwell Lane:

- Would like to reiterate what Mr. Nixon was saying and have realistic evaluation of where we are now. It was a little surreal with the accolades that Dr. Taylor had.
- Would like to see realistic facts as to where we are and I do like the fact that the community and stakeholders will be involved. I do hope we bring enough in to properly evaluate what we want for the new superintendent.

PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED @ 8:18 P.M.

REOPENED @ 8:19 P.M.

A. C. McIntosh – 31 Crosswicks Place:

- Take time so this can be right and we find unique fit for our community and find someone who will lead us into this uniqueness.
- Addressed the Interim Superintendent and told him to set tone and steps to get us to excellence. Our expectations aren’t just graduation but what comes next after graduation. Our kids need to be competitive whether they go into the work force or college and that’s what we’re lacking.
- Would like you to carry this over to the new Superintendent. You talk about a bridge, be that bridge but talk about our strengths and challenges. Don’t be blind to them.

PUBLIC COMMENT CLOSED

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

NONE

MOTION TO ADJOURN

Moved by Kimbrali Davis

APPROVAL OF DRAFT AGENDA

Seconded by Carlos Worthy

A roll call resulted as follows:

Kimbrali Davis	-	Yes	Laurie Gibson-Parker	-	Yes
Alexis Harkley	-	Yes	Debra Williams	-	Yes
Carlos Worthy	-	Yes	Grover McKenzie	-	Yes
Dennis Tunstall	-	Yes			

7 Voting: 7 Affirmatives, 7 Negative, 0 Abstentions

MOTION PASSED

7/26/19
Date


Kelvin L. Smith
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Meeting ended @ 8:23 P.M.