

WHITMAN-HANSON REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Minutes of February 15, 2018
Held at the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School
600 Franklin Street, Whitman MA

Meeting convened: 4:00 p.m.

Meeting adjourned: 8:04 p.m.

Members present: Robert Hayes, Frederick Small, Michael Jones, Robert O'Brien, Jr., Daniel Cullity, Kevin Lynam, Robert Trotta, and Steve Bois

Members absent: Alexandria Taylor and Christopher Howard

Administrators present: Kyle Riley, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Christine Suckow, Executive Director of Business Services
Chad Peters, Director of Technology Services

Chair Hayes brought the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and announced the meeting was being recorded.

Interview Preparation

Order of interviews

Chair Hayes reported the Superintendent Search Screening Sub-committee put forth three finalist candidates for the position of Superintendent of Schools.

The candidates include Dr. John M. Marcus, Assistant Superintendent, Sharon Public Schools, Mr. Kevin J. McNamara, Principal, Lincoln High School, Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, RI, and Mr. Jeffrey Szymaniak, Principal, Whitman-Hanson Regional High School.

The three finalists were invited to attend the February 15, 2018 School Committee meeting for interviews at 4:00 p.m. Chair Hayes stated the order of the interviews will be by draw, in an effort to be as fair and transparent as possible. Student Council Representative, Marah Burt, drew the names in the following order of interviews.

Dr. John Marcus – first interview

Mr. Kevin McNamara – second interview

Mr. Jeffrey Szymaniak – last interview

Superintendent Search Sub-Committee

Chair Hayes expressed his gratitude to the Superintendent Search Screening Sub-committee on the work completed to date in the search for a new superintendent for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District. Chair Hayes reported nineteen candidates applied for the position on School Spring and three finalists were selected by the Superintendent Search Screening Sub-Committee and put forth to interview with the full School Committee.

Discussion of Site Visits

The Committee discussed the site visits held on February 12 at Whitman-Hanson Regional High School, February 13 at Sharon Middle School in Sharon, and February 13 at Lincoln High School in Lincoln, RI.

Interview Questions for Finalists

School Committee members submitted questions and were charged to select a number of questions for the candidates. It was the consensus of the Committee to ask each candidate seven selected questions, as discussed. Questions were assigned to each School Committee member with the exception of Chair Hayes.

The Committee determined the following questions would be asked of each finalist by each School Committee member.

1. Rob O'Brien:

What is your vision for the structure of positions at the central office, and what type of candidate would you seek to hire as assistant superintendent?

2. Bob Trotta:

What is the staff's role in curriculum development and how would you initiate curriculum change?

3. Kevin Lynam:

Here are several district goals that, because of budget limitations, have not become a reality: tuition-free full-day kindergarten for all students in the district; foreign language instruction for students in grade 6 and up; the hiring of social workers at the elementary level; the hiring of permanent library/media specialists at the elementary level. Which of these goals seems like it should be the top priority?

4. Mike Jones:

In receiving complaints that our schools are not being cleaned properly, how do you see yourself enforcing the S.J. Services cleaning contract to ensure that we are getting our money's worth and are applying fines for not performing to the contract.

5. Fred Small:

How would you conduct a campaign for an annual general budget vote and describe your experiences with budget cuts, reallocation of funds or monitoring a budget?

6. Dan Cullity:

How would you go about establishing good public relations between the superintendent's office, the staff, and the politicians in both Whitman and Hanson, and describe the steps you would take to improve communication.

7. Steve Bois:

Describe your vision for our schools.

Dr. Marcus was the first candidate interviewed beginning at 4:45 p.m. Each interview lasted approximately one hour.

Mr. Trotta added one additional question for each candidate in regards to transitioning into the position and their vision of an entry plan.

Each candidate provided an opening statement, was asked the specific interview questions, and was afforded a closing statement.

There were two short breaks after each interview. At 5:42 the Committee took a break and reconvened at 5:47 p.m. At 6:27 p.m. there was a short break and the Committee reconvened at 6:34 p.m. The interviews ended at 7:15 p.m.

Superintendent Selection

The Committee discussed each candidate. Mr. Small shared information on professional development and mentoring programs and opportunities for new superintendents with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendent's (MASS) and the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS).

Chair Hayes indicated that a selection for a new Superintendent for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District would be made that evening. A follow up executive session meeting will be scheduled to negotiate a contract. Chair Hayes asked the Committee to rank each candidate as the number one candidate, number two candidate, and number three candidate.

The Committee shared their opinions on each finalist and ranked each as the #1 lead candidate, #2 candidate, or #3 last candidate. The Chair tallied first, second, and third choice candidates made by the Committee members.

Unanimously, Mr. Jeffrey Szymaniak was the top #1 candidate choice, with Dr. John Marcus chosen as the second choice, and Mr. Kevin McNamara as the third choice.

VOTE: Mr. Jones motioned; Mr. O'Brien seconded; voted to offer Mr. Jeffrey Szymaniak the position of Superintendent of Schools for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District, pending contract negotiations. The motion carried unanimously.

It was the consensus of the Committee, in the event Mr. Jeff Szymaniak did not accept the position, to offer Dr. John Marcus the position. Subsequently, the following votes were taken.

VOTE: Mr. Jones motioned; Mr. Small seconded; voted to offer Dr. John Marcus the position of Superintendent of Schools for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District, in the event Jeffrey Szymaniak did not take the position. The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE: Mr. Jones motioned; Mr. Small seconded; voted to offer Kevin McNamara the position of Superintendent of Schools for the Whitman-Hanson Regional School District, in the event Dr. John Marcus did not take the position. The motion carried did not carry.

Several members indicated they would prefer to re-open the position if Dr. Marcus was no longer interested in the position of Superintendent.

VOTE: Mr. Small motioned; Mr. Cullity seconded; voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Michelle Lindberg

Meeting Materials and Handouts:

- Agenda for February 15, 2018
- Memo from Superintendent of Schools
- Interview Questions
- Superintendent Rubric At-A-Glance
- Superintendent of Schools - Job Description
- Resumes for each finalist (Dr. Marcus, Mr. McNamara and Mr. Szymaniak)