



**BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OPEN SESSION SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
April 3, 2014**

LOCATION: Swift River Elementary School Library
TIME: 6:30 p.m.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Dr. Linda Tsoumas, Chair (present); Ms. Clare Popowich, Vice-Chair (present); Mr. Richard Fritsch, Secretary (present); Ms. Myndi Bogdanovich, Member (present); Dr. Michael Knapp, Member (present)

ADMINISTRATION: Mr. Brian Cameron, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning (present); Mr. Scott Karen, Director of Technology (present); Mr. Ben Admussen, Data Administrator (present); Mr. Thomas Ruscio, JBMS Principal (present); Ms. Paula Fitzgerald, CHCS Principal (present); Mr. Robert Kuhn, SRE Principal (present)

VISITORS: Ms. Patricia Correia, M.A.S.C. Consultant; Dr. John Provost, Superintendent candidate; Ms. Brenda Aldrich, Selectmen Liaison to School Committee; Officer Jason Krol, School Resource Officer; Ms. Christina Aponte; Ms. Sally Shattuck; Mr. John Benoit; Mr. Andrew Berrios; Ms. Dawn French; Ms. Mona Griffin; Mr. Robert Griffin; Ms. Diane Presnal; Ms. Linda Sterling; Mr. Eric Goldscheider, Hampshire Gazette reporter; Mr. Jim Russell, Republican reporter

MINUTES

I. Call to order

Dr. Tsoumas called the School Committee meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

II. Finalist Interview for position of Superintendent of Schools Candidate - Dr. John Provost

Ms. Correia introduced the Superintendent candidate, Dr. John Provost, who was present to be interviewed by the School Committee. She then turned the meeting back over to Dr. Tsoumas, who welcomed Dr. Provost and read an opening statement as to how the interview would proceed. The format of the interview consists of three parts: opening remarks by the candidate; seven prepared questions from the Committee members; closing questions and/or comments by the candidate.

Dr. Provost began with a discussion of his site visit today throughout the district, noting that he was impressed by what he witnessed during his tour and he was not surprised at the great results that the Belchertown Public School system achieves. The School Committee members then asked questions in turn with regard to resolving issues, curriculum development, management style, past experience with Student Support Services, community relations, learning from mistakes, and budget issues. Dr. Provost responded thoroughly and thoughtfully to all questions, often providing specific examples of his own experiences in these areas. Dr. Provost closed his remarks by discussing the many services that schools provide in communities and he said that much of the value of education can be quantified, providing many examples of the benefits it affords. He also commented on the benefits that cannot be quantified, such as friendships and memories, and how those also contribute to education as an important public good.

At the conclusion of this interview, Dr. Tsoumas called for a 10 minute recess before discussion and selection of the future Superintendent.

III. Following interview, discussion and selection of future Superintendent

Upon returning to open session, Dr. Tsoumas read the following statement:

"The School Committee is now faced with making a significant decision in the selection of our next Superintendent. In preparation for this step, the Superintendent Screening Committee completed the initial work of screening of the applicants and selecting the finalist candidates that we have interviewed this week. That committee did an excellent job in bringing forth strong candidates for our consideration.

The School Committee and members of the Superintendent Screening Committee conducted site visits to the school districts where each of our finalists currently work. We spent a meeting discussing the outcome of those visits. In addition, the candidates have spent a day in the Belchertown Public Schools prior to their finalist interview this week. As a part of that visit, multiple stakeholders have had an opportunity to meet and converse with the finalist candidates.

I would like to thank those in attendance for your comments and the feedback you have provided to the School Committee. The School Committee is conducting its business in open session; however, the next segment of our meeting will not include participation of the audience here this evening.

The School Committee must now take a vote to select the individual to lead our district. I will entertain a motion to offer this position to one of the candidates. This will require a second and then we can begin discussion with a vote."

MOTION: Ms. Popowich moved that the School Committee offer Dr. John Provost the permanent position of Superintendent of the Belchertown Public Schools, pending successful contract negotiations. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: Dr. Tsoumas prefaced the discussion by stating that it must only concern the competencies of the candidates for the position of Superintendent of our district. Dr. Knapp stated that with Ms. Correira's guidance, the School Committee was able to find an accessible leader in Dr. Provost with communication being important in this position, that he would balance the needs of the district within our budget, and that he provided excellent answers to all the questions from the School Committee. Ms. Bogdanovich stated that she had felt strongly about all three candidates, but she concurred with Dr. Knapp's assessment of Dr. Provost, and she was especially impressed with Dr. Provost's closing statement, as well as his personal vision of students striving beyond expectations. Mr. Fritsch stated that he felt all three candidates had strengths, but that one in particular was most in tune with Belchertown, and so he does not support the appointment of Dr. Provost as Superintendent. Ms. Popowich stated that she felt that Dr. Provost was the best fit for the Belchertown school district. Dr. Tsoumas stated that she concurred with Ms. Bogdanovich with regard to the strength of Dr. Provost's closing remarks, and she feels that this individual has a professional and personal dedication to the advancement of students.

VOTE: 4-1-0 (nay vote: Mr. Fritsch)

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to change his vote to yea on the selection of Dr. Provost as Superintendent in order to make it a unanimous vote by the School Committee. Dr. Knapp seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Members of the public asked what the next steps will be if Dr. Provost declines the offer of this position since he was also chosen by another district. Dr. Tsoumas stated that the Superintendent Search process would then be reopened if Dr. Provost does not accept Belchertown's offer.

At this point, Ms. Correia advised Dr. Tsoumas to place a call to Dr. Provost to inform him of the vote to select him as Superintendent. Dr. Tsoumas left the meeting and made the call to Dr. Provost. Upon returning to the meeting, she said that she had had a "positive discussion" with Dr. Provost and he asked that he be given the evening to think about his choices and he would inform her in the morning of his decision.

IV. Motion To Adjourn

MOTION: Mr. Fritsch moved to adjourn the School Committee meeting at 7:48 p.m. Ms. Bogdanovich seconded the motion.

VOTE: 5-0-0, approved unanimously

COMMENT: Dr. Tsoumas thanked the members of the public for their attendance at the meeting, and she also thanked the Superintendent Screening Committee for their dedication to the process, and the School Committee for their thoughtful consideration of their selection of the potential future Superintendent.

Respectfully submitted by,



Kathryn A. Petersen

Non-Confidential Recording Secretary to the School Committee

School Committee members' signatures:

Linda Tsoumas, Linda Tsoumas, Chair

Clare Popowich, Clare Popowich, Vice Chair

Richard Fritsch, Richard Fritsch, Secretary

Myndi Bogdanovich, Myndi Bogdanovich, Member

Michael Knapp, Michael Knapp, Member

The mission of the Belchertown Public Schools is to ensure that every student meets with success every day. To that end, we pledge to ensure that we have rigorous, standards-based curriculum; instruction designed to meet the needs of diverse learners in every classroom; and access to the global learning community via state-of-the-art technology in schools that are communities of respect and civility for all.

2011-2015 Strategic Plan Goals (adopted by the Belchertown School Committee, 3/1/11):

Goal #1: To have guaranteed (standards-based and implemented by all), viable (doable and accessible to every student), seamless K-12 curriculum in every content area.

Goal #2: To have rigorous (standards-based), relevant (grounded in 21st Century skills), differentiated instructional practices with the ability to access the global learning community via technology available to every learner.

Goal #3: To implement a plan to ensure that our students understand the importance of acceptance, tolerance, and respect supported by all adults in the community.

The Belchertown School Committee conducts its business in open session pursuant to Chapter 30A, Section 21 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The public is welcome to comment only on items on the agenda for this meeting as noted above. If you wish to address the School Committee regarding an item not on the agenda for this meeting, please contact the Superintendent of Schools at 413.323.0423 or via email at superintendent@belchertown.org to determine the best way to address your concerns (see School Committee Policy BEDH).

BELCHERTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR SESSION
SIGN IN SHEET

DATE: 4-3-14

PLS. PRINT NAME BELOW

JOHN BEN OIT

Brooklyn Alverick

ANDREW BERRIOS

J-14

Dawn French

Thomas R. Busco

Ben Admassu

Mona Griffin

Rob Griffin

Christina Aponte

Diane Poersnal

Jim Russell

Linda Sterling