

Jack Morehouse called the virtual special meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Farouk Rajab, Craig Esposito, Alisa Morrison, and Heidi Simmons. Also present were Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary, Dr. Van Riley, Superintendent, and Mary Anne Butler, Assistant Superintendent.

Board of Education Update - Selection of a Temporary Board Chair and Board Secretary

Jack Morehouse voiced he thought Farouk Rajab would be an excellent Temporary Board Chair until a replacement could be found.

Heidi Simmons spoke she wanted their constituents to know that this change in the status of the Board will not be a change for promises for action that the Board has been making over the past year particularly to the students, parents and other parties who are invested in the good of our schools. Mrs. Simmons wanted to be assured that the temporary chair will be willing to support the ongoing commitments such as; 1) reopening of schools, 2) social and moral justice, 3) completion of superintendent's evaluation, 4) finishing the investigation of Mr. Chokas. She asked Mr. Rajab will he agree to support these ongoing commitments and if yes she would support his nomination for Board Chair. Mr. Rajab noted that if selected for Temporary Board Chair he would definitely support and is delighted to support those actions because these are things we have started.

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Heidi Simmons.

Motion 1: Motion amended to nominate Farouk Rajab as Temporary Board Chair and add the nomination of Alisa Morrison as Temporary Board Secretary to the motion.

All: Aye

Farouk Rajab, Temporary Board Chair, accepted the nomination and spoke he appreciates the trust of the Board in him and thanked the Board. He also thanked Alisa Morrison for stepping up and taking on the Temporary Board Secretary.

Communications & Recognitions

Jack Morehouse recognized the service of Candace Anderson former Board Secretary and Alexa Garvey former Board Chair and thanked them for work on the Board, and wished them the best. He added that Alexa Garvey was truly doing it for the kids especially with regards to the investigation her heart was in the right place. He voiced he was grateful for the opportunity to serve with Mrs. Garvey on the Board, she was a terrific Board Chair.

Heidi Simmons referenced Alexa Garvey as her mentor and tutor during her time on the Board. She added she commits to continuing where she and the Mrs. Garvey left off. We have promises to keep and miles to go before we sleep, thank you Alexa.

Farouk Rajab spoke he was truly privileged to serve with Alexa Garvey and Candace Anderson on the Board. They are exemplary citizens and worked their heart off for our community. He thanked them for their time, they have done a great job.

Comments from Citizens

Maureen Steinhoff – (Emailed Comment) I would like to express my thanks to Board of Education members Alexa Garvey and Candace Anderson for their service to Stonington Public Schools. They served our community with kind hearts, level heads, and unwavering support for the teachers, students and administrators of SPS. It is my hope that the stakeholders involved in electing their replacements consider the importance and value of this selection of new members to the BOE.

Consent Agenda

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Craig Esposito:

Motion 2: To approve the consent agenda items A-C and remove D for discussion.

All: Aye

Jack Morehouse had a question on the Employee Contract to regards if it is a new position. Dr. Riley this was a new this current year, a year ago. When we did the list of contracts last meeting we inadvertently left it off. This person has been in this position for a while.

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Craig Esposito:

Motion 3: To approve Item D on the consent agenda Employee Contract Maintenance and Custodian Supervisor.

All: Aye

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Riley reported our time teachers, administrators has been working on reopening schools but will discuss this item further on the agenda.

Letter of Support for the Mystic River Boat House Brownfields Grant

Farouk Rajab shared information on this grant and asked the Board for their support to send a letter to the State of Connecticut supporting them giving us a grant for the Brownfield. All Board members were in agreement to send the letter of support.

Update on Independent investigation

Farouk Rajab asked the Board table this item since he had no updated information on the investigator at this time. Alisa Morrison asked that when the information is received it be shared with the Board all at the same time and would like Mr. Rajab to relay that message to the attorney. Heidi Simmons asked if there will need to be a special meeting to share this with the public. Alisa Morrison voiced she believed it would need to become public at that point. Mr. Rajab was not certain and would get the answer for the Board.

Reopening Task Force Update

Dr. Riley spoke we had the first meeting of the task force and the timeline is very short. He shared that there are so many issues involved in this. The report will need to be at the state by July 24th. We are looking at academics, safety, emotional health issues and cost issues. The principals presented various plans at each grade level to the committee. The committee had good questions and feedback to the presentation. He spoke there is an email for anyone to submit questions which is posted on our website. The next meeting is Wednesday, July 15th at 3pm. He communicated that a new survey to family and staff was sent out and there will be at least three surveys before school starts. These surveys ask if they plan to come back and what they need to come back. He spoke of the various protocols that we need to meet and will bring back plans with all the different options and costs. He noted that the Board will need to come up with a plan that can be submitted to the state by July 24th. He spoke of the various types of committee members on the task force, including teachers, parents, students, nurse, administrators and other staff. Heidi Simmons noted the email to send comments to, reopeningtaskforce@stoningtonschools.org. She spoke she had already gotten a suggestion from a parent who asked about student socialization. Dr. Riley added we will bring back a plan to the Board that what we can do to keep students safe and come back to school. There will be a distance learning option and other options. Dr. Riley requested the Board find a date to meet to approve a plan so that we are able to have a plan to review by July 23rd. All the documents discussed at the task force meeting are on our website. The Board discussed a date for the special board meeting. Farouk Rajab noted we will have an option for every family.

Discussion Regarding Superintendent Evaluation Process

Farouk Rajab asked the Board to table this item. The Board had discussion regarding the process and setting a date to do the Superintendent's Evaluation. Farouk Rajab noted they will set a date for the evaluation. Dr. Riley voiced that the other legal issue here is that Connecticut General Statute 10-157 states in the contract, that the Board must have a mutual agreed upon format for the evaluation and mutually agreed upon criteria for the evaluation. He voiced he did not think they had that right now. He suggested at the regular August meeting there be a closed session to discuss the format, the guidelines and the criteria. Alisa Morrison asked the superintendent if he did not like the format that has been done in the past. Dr. Riley spoke he would like to discuss the format. Craig Esposito asked if we have reports from Alexa Garvey and Candace Anderson and if they still would like to submit them. The Board was in consensus to meet as a Board to discuss the process.

Monthly Reports

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 4: To accept the monthly reports.

All: Aye

Committee Reports

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Alisa Morrison:

Motion 5: To accept the committee reports.

All: Aye

Items for Future Agendas

Board Retreat will be placed on hold until Board has the new members in place.

Board Comments/Concerns

Jack Morehouse voiced his concerns regarding the cut to funding of the assistant tennis coach. He gave a history on the coaching of the sport and voiced he would like to find a way to come up with the \$3,000 to support and bring back the assistant coach position. This will go to the Finance and Facilities Committee for further discussion. Dr. Riley will also reach out to the high school for more information and share this with the Board.

Heidi Simmons also spoke regarding the funding for the rowing that she had previously requested. She would like to know the status of the Athletic Committee idea. She added we need to look at all the sports and have it equal. Dr. Riley suggested this be one of the Board's goals.

Alisa Morrison asked that the Board discuss the process of filling the two spots on the Board and feels they need to be filled quickly so that they are in place for the August Board meeting. The Board discussed various ways to advertise for the positions, such as newspaper and social media. Craig Esposito shared the information from the Charter regarding appointing a Board member. Jack Morehouse noted that in the past we advertised in the newspaper. Alisa Morrison spoke this item could be added to one of the special meetings. Farouk Rajab agreed it will be added and will review the Charter on the process and will get a legal opinion before the meeting. Dr. Riley asked if the Board meeting would be July 20th or July 21st to discuss the reopening. Mr. Rajab noted he would add it to the July 21st meeting.

Farouk Rajab thanked the attendees for hanging in with the Board during the meeting.

Adjournment

The following motion was made by Jack Morehouse and seconded by Craig Esposito:

Motion 6: To adjourn at 8:06 p.m.

All: Aye

Alisa Morrison, Temporary Board Secretary