

February 24, 2020

SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

The Scranton School Board held a Special Meeting for the Board Vacancy on Monday, February 24, 2020 at 7:00pm in the Board Room of the Administration Building, 425 N. Washington Ave., Scranton, PA.

President Gilmartin called the meeting to order at 7:23pm with a Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Roll Call: By the Secretary.

Present: Directors Cruz, Fox, Hume, Malloy, Schuster, Welby, Yanni and Gilmartin.

Absent: All Present.

President Gilmartin announced the purpose of the meeting is for the Board vacant seat.

Public Comment

Holly Meade, Northeast Intermediate teacher, addressed the board concerning the current board vacancy and decisions made by past board members. Mrs. Meade said the board has the opportunity to choose a board member that truly has the best intentions, a person with courage, passion and the intellect to guide this board through recovery and beyond. Mrs. Meade recommends Ann Connell because no matter what, Mrs. Connell will always consider the education of the children of Scranton.

Matt Barrett, Scranton resident and parent of Northeast Intermediate student, thanked the board for their service and urged the board to make sure the person they appoint is willing to ask the hard questions, make the hard decisions and separate themselves from the administration and make sure they're acting in the best interest of the district and the students they are serving.

At this time Mrs. Orr, Secretary asked those in attendance if Mr. Darwin Shaw, who applied for the vacant seat, was present. Mr. Shaw did not attend the meeting.

The candidates were now sequestered and called on to address the board in the order they signed in.

Mr. Sean McAndrew, a lifelong resident of Scranton and graduate of Penn State University with a degree in Business Marketing and Management as well as a Graduate Certificate in Budgeting and Government Finance, wants to give back to his district. Mr. McAndrew also served as a Board Member and President of Scranton Parks and Recreations and thinks with his finance background he wants to ensure the health and safety of the students and employees of the district. Mr. McAndrew knows it won't be easy dealing with the finance but he can feel a sense of change in the district with the new board, the new superintendent and the recovery officer.

Director Yanni thanked Mr. McAndrew for stepping up and asked why at this time he wants to be involved.

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Mr. McAndrew thinks it's the most important time in the history of the board, there is a lot of stuff that wasn't done correctly in the past 10 years and we have to ensure we're not only fixing what's wrong but also setting the right guidelines going forward so this doesn't happen again.

Director Hume asked Mr. McAndrew how he feels about having to deal with the hard, contentious, and unpopular decisions.

Mr. McAndrew said a lot of people have been affected by the decisions and he is not afraid to make the tough decisions.

Director Malloy asked Mr. McAndrew why at this time he is interested in joining the board.

Mr. McAndrew wants to give back to the district and community and he thinks he can make an impact and really wants to be involved. Mr. McAndrew believes Scranton is a great place although there is a lot of negativity there is a lot of positivity and he wants to be a part of fixing the negative.

Director Schuster asked what the challenges are that the school district faces.

Mr. McAndrew believes the buildings are in disrepair and we need to ensure the health and safety of the students and employees with a safe environment. In addition is the fair funding issue with the district being millions of dollars in debt with long term debt and the shortage of thousands of dollars per student from the State.

Mr. McAndrew also believes there is a data issue where we need to have up to date information in order to make a sound decision.

Director Schuster asked if Mr. McAndrew, if appointed this evening, if he would run for office after this term is up.

Mr. McAndrew said absolutely adding that he wants to see the recovery plan through.

Director Welby asked Mr. McAndrew to expand on his skill sets and how those skills would help him on the board.

Mr. McAndrew responded that he is a team player and has the ability to analyze numbers and make sound decisions on finance and education.

Director Cruz asked what he believes are the strengths of the school district.

Mr. McAndrew said the students, adding that we need to highlight their accomplishments, congratulate them, celebrate their achievements and also the great teachers in the district for getting them there.

Mrs. Stephanie Davis, a resident and parent of children at Isaac Tripp Elementary wants to be a part of changing the district, change the status quo and does not like the direction of

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where the district and the community is going. Mrs. Davis would hope to be a part of that change.

Director Yanni asked what is her biggest motivating factor for wanting to be a part of the Scranton School Board.

Mrs. Davis responded that her children are the biggest reason as well as the rest of the 900 students at Isaac Tripp and wants them to get the best education and does not want to see any programs cut.

Director Hume asked how would she deal with making very unpopular decisions.

Mrs. Davis said she would have to review all of the information and it would have to be in the student's best interest.

Director Malloy asked why at this time she is interested in serving on the Scranton School Board.

Mrs. Davis said she applied twice and she feels she needs to at least try again for her children and wants to be part of the changes needed in the district.

Director Schuster asked what she believes are the challenges facing the school district and if appointed this evening if she would run for office after this term is up.

Mrs. Davis responded that there are many challenges but she doesn't believe Scranton is the only district that deals with these challenges or the financial restraints and staffing levels. Mrs. Davis believes there is a lack of solutions and they need to think outside the box in terms of how to come up with solutions.

Mrs. Davis did not know if she would run for office.

Director Welby asked Mrs. Davis to expand a little bit about her skills set and what she would bring to the board.

Mrs. Davis said she would bring a lot of positivity and a different set of thinking. Mrs. Davis has ideas to bring money into the city adding the tax base is shrinking however the school's population is still growing.

Director Cruz asked what she believes are the strengths and positives of the district.

Mrs. Davis said the students are the strengths.

Ann Connell, retired teacher now addressed the board and said she is not active in local politics however the past few months and years she's been aware and following what is going on in the district. Mrs. Connell believes it is important to have a teacher on the board adding that she worked for the district for over 30 years.

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Mrs. Connell spoke of her experience in the district and having worked in nearly all the buildings and that she knows the student community, the parent community, the teaching community and the taxpaying community that make up the entire community.

Mrs. Connell believes the board the administration is there to support and serve and she would like to be able to help in any way she can. Mrs. Connell does not have a financial background but she does have communication skills and she is very eager to look into the budget and the recovery plan and understand what needs to be done and help find ways to solve some of the problems.

Mrs. Connell said we need decent, hard working people who are willing to be transparent, willing to be accountable for their decisions and have the student's best interest at heart and she promises to do that.

Director Yanni asked what her motivation is for wanting to be a part of this.

Mrs. Connell feels it would be a plus to have a teacher on the board and she is fortunate enough to be retired and has the time to devote to the responsibilities and feels it is her civic duty to offer her services.

Director Hume asked how she would cope with having to make unpopular decisions.

Mrs. Connell thinks that if she has all of the information to make the decisions but cutting programs would be the last resort and they have to go into the buildings and find what the best course of action would be.

Director Malloy asked why at this time does she want to do this.

Mrs. Connell said her heart is broken and she feels bad about what is happening in the district, she feels bad for the students and families and for whatever the reasons are, here we are, and she feels maybe she can help and she would be happy to try.

Director Schuster asked what she feels are the challenges facing the district and if appointed would she run for office after this term is up.

Mrs. Connell said obviously there are financial challenges but also everyone is down in the dumps, they're not positive but they are trying the best they can but they feel they're not getting anywhere and it goes for everyone in the district, not just the board and administration but people need to feel like they're supported and they would feel better about what they're doing.

Mrs. Connell said she is not active in local politics and doesn't think she would run for office.

Director Welby asked Mrs. Connell to expand on her skills set and what experience would she bring to the board.

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Mrs. Connell said as a former teacher she is familiar with the day to day operations in the buildings, she knows the successes and challenges that are faced everyday in the schools, she's always been a team player and she has the time to give.

Director Cruz asked what she feels are the strengths and positives in the district.

Mrs. Connell said this is a wonderful community and when morale is down people come together and everybody supports the students which is the ultimate goal and we have a wonderful teaching staff who work hard everyday

At this time board members submitted their choices to the Board Secretary.

Mrs. Orr, Mr. Paul Dougherty and Mrs. Sarah Hofius-Hall tallied the results and the candidates were returned to the board room.

President Gilmartin and the board thanked everyone for coming; they had a wonderful pool of candidates and wonderful discussion with all of them and encouraged them to stay involved.

Mrs. Orr announced the top candidate is Mr. Sean McAndrew and asked for a motion to appoint Mr. McAndrew.

Director Schuster made a motion, seconded by Director Malloy.

ON THE QUESTION:

Director Yanni said that although she thinks Mr. McAndrew is very well qualified she reserved her yes vote for another candidate who she thinks would better serve the board with her education background.

The motion to appoint Mr. McAndrew passed with seven (7) affirmative and one (1) negative vote. Director Yanni voted in the negative.

Solicitor Audi now swore in Mr. McAndrew and Mr. McAndrew took his seat on the board.

There being no further business a motion to adjourn was made by Director Schuster, seconded by Director Cruz and the meeting adjourned at 8:07PM.

By: _____
Secretary