



## Minutes from the Special Meeting of the Board of Directors Tuesday, March 7, 2023

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The Board of Directors held a Special Board Meeting on Tuesday, March 7, 2023. The meeting began at 6 pm and was held in-person at Union Event Center and virtually via a Zoom link posted on the Mead School District website. Directors Denholm, Burchard, Olson, Cannon and Gray were present. Also attending was Superintendent Shawn Woodward.

### **I. Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting began with President Denholm asking all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **II. Approval of Agenda**

Director Burchard made a motion to approve the meeting agenda, as presented. Director Gray seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **III. Public Comment on Agenda Items**

Prior to the start of the meeting no community members/individuals signed up to make Public Comment on agenda topics.

### **IV. Superintendent Search Options**

Noting the resignation of current Superintendent Shawn Woodward, effective June 30, 2023, President Denholm, on the topic of Superintendent Search Options, invited Director Cannon to provide a current update on the process.

Director Cannon began by recapping the superintendent search timeline, to date, starting with the hiring of Shawn Woodward by the Monroe School District on January 26<sup>th</sup>. This was followed by the board meetings and community correspondence as set forth below:

- **February 2, 2023** – Board Work Session where the following three hiring options were discussed:
  - Full National Search
  - Interim Appointment
  - Direct Hire/Appointment
- **February 13, 2023** – Regular Board Meeting where in Executive Session the board evaluated the qualifications of potential superintendent candidates.
- **February 15, 2023** – Parent/staff email announcing Shawn Woodward would be leaving the district effective June 30, 2023. This correspondence included a survey link providing the opportunity for the community to give input on the qualities, skills and qualifications they would like to see in the next superintendent. The survey closed on February 23, 2023.
- **February 16, 2023** – *Mead Matters* newsletter sent to the community at-large that included the same announcement about Superintendent Woodward leaving and the survey link.
- **February 24, 2023** – Board Work Session where in Executive Session the board evaluated the qualifications of potential superintendent candidates.
- **February 27, 2023** – Regular Board Meeting where the board officially accepted the resignation of Shawn Woodward effective June 30, 2023, Director Cannon recapped survey results and highlighted the three hiring options under consideration, followed by an Executive Session where the board evaluated the qualifications of potential superintendent candidates.

In reviewing the three potential hiring options, Director Cannon noted the pros and cons of doing a Full-Scale National Search, an Interim Appointment, or going back to vetted candidates from the full-scale search done four years ago and doing a Direct Hire/Appointment from this pool. The need to not rush, but still be expeditious in the hiring process, was noted.

Following a request for a motion from President Denholm, Director Cannon, noting the other two options will remain in reserve, made a motion for the board to move forward and consider a Direct Hire/Appointment from the pool of candidates vetted in the full-scale superintendent search conducted four years ago. Director Olson seconded the motion.

Discussion included the following:

Director Burchard, who was on the board four years ago and participated in that full-scale hiring process, noted there were 15 applicants with five selected for first round interviews. This was narrowed to three quality finalists with Shawn Woodward selected for the position. Based on the number of current superintendent openings in the state, Director Burchard shared he does not believe the district would get a better slate of candidates today than it did four years ago. Therefore, he is supportive of the motion to move forward and consider a Direct Hire/Appointment from the pool of candidates vetted four years ago.

Director Olson shared he believes the process to date has been good, transparent and done the right way. He concurred with Director Burchard and is supportive of the motion on the table.

Director Cannon noted he would normally be an advocate for a full-scale search process like was done four years ago. However, considering the uniqueness of the current time frame, he made the motion to move forward and consider a Direct Hire/Appointment from the pool of candidates vetted four years ago. He additionally noted there is local precedent (West Valley and Spokane) for doing a Direct Hire/Appointment.

Director Gray believes, as elected representatives, it is the responsibility of the board to get the best candidates for the position. Therefore, she supports an open recruitment process that provides multiple opportunities for the entire community to participate. She contended the community is entitled to a more open process than is provided in the Director Hire/Appointment option.

President Denholm referenced the themes identified in the community input survey and noted candidate pools for current superintendent openings (Tumwater & Bellevue) are very weak. Many applicants do not have superintendent experience. He is supportive of the motion on the table.

At the conclusion of board discussion on the topic, President Denholm called for a vote on the motion made by Director Cannon, and seconded by Director Olson, to move forward and consider a Direct Hire/Appointment from the pool of candidates vetted in the full-scale superintendent search conducted four years ago, while keeping the other two options in reserve. The motion carried with Directors Burchard, Olson, Cannon and President Denholm voting in favor. Director Gray was opposed.

Acknowledging the awkwardness of immediately adjourning the meeting following the official vote, Director Cannon noted, as shared earlier in his timeline review, that the board has participated in numerous discussions on the search process and the qualifications of potential candidates. While respecting Director Gray's position, he noted there are instances when differences in perspective and opinion on a particular topic are present among board members.

Director Burchard noted he is comfortable after reviewing the survey results to move forward with the Direct Hire/Appointment option knowing that if a candidate is not selected the board can pursue one of the other hiring options.

**V. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:17 pm.

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**President**

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**Secretary**