SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Special Meeting **April 28, 2015**

Called for 4:30 PM in the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of reviewing, revising and approving a draft Request for Proposal (RFP) to retain a search firm in connection with the search for a Superintendent of Schools.

Members Present: Ms. Cronin, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding (~~ABSENT~~), Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Osborne, and Mayor Maher

Also Present: Ms. Barbara J. Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources
Ms. Amy L. Witts, City Purchasing Agent

Mayor Maher in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 4:34 PM.

The Chair gave a brief history of the "invitation to bid" process which was used to hire a search firm during the last Superintendent's search. He explained that he has met with Ms. Allen, Ms. Witts and the City Manager and it was decided to use the request for proposal (RFP) process for this search. He also mentioned that only two firms submitted bids during the last search. He explained that using the RFP process gives the Committee more flexibility in that the firm is selected by evaluation criteria and not by the submission of the lowest bid.

The Chair introduced Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources and official Superintendent Search Liaison Designee, and Amy Witts, City Purchasing Agent.

The Chair turned the meeting over to Ms. Allen. Ms. Allen expressed her appreciation to Ms. Witts, Ms. Mallon and the City Manager for their assistance in this process. Ms. Witts explained that she is at the meeting to help guide the Members through the RFP process and to answer any questions with respect to that. She explained that the RFP process allows the School Committee to take into account the most advantageous proposal rather than just looking at the lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

Ms. Allen walked the Members through the Draft Request for Proposals for Executive Recruitment for Superintendent Search Consultant Services, focusing on pages 5-9, scope of services and comparative evaluation criteria.

Important Dates:

Copies of Request for Proposal will be available on or after Thursday, May 7, 2015 at the Office of the Purchasing Agent, Cambridge City Hall, and from the City's website: www.cambridgema.gov, online services, Purchasing Bid List, Regular RFP, File No. XXXX.

Sealed proposals will be received at the Office of the Purchasing Agent, Cambridge City Hall until 11:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 21, 2015

Questions concerning the RFP must be submitted in writing by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 19, 2015 to Amy L. Witts, City Purchasing Agent, at Cambridge City Hall or by fax (617) 349-4008.

- Instructions to Proposers
- Evaluations of the Proposals
- About the Cambridge Public Schools
- Scope of Services
- Minimum Quality Requirements
- Comparative Evaluation Criteria
  - ✓ Experience
  - ✓ Key Personnel and Capacity
  - ✓ Recruitment Strategy and Search Plan
  - ✓ Search Timeline
  - ✓ Approach to Community Engagement
  - ✓ Recruitment Materials
  - ✓ References
- Required Submissions
- Insurance Requirements
- Price Proposal
- Anti-Collusion and Tax Compliance Certificate
- Cori Compliance Form
- Appendix A
- Appendix B

Ms. Witts outlined the process of the RFP evaluation. An evaluation will be done by each Member for every firm submitting a proposal and meeting the criteria. These forms need to be filled out completely with rating and reason for rating. A composite evaluation will be done to incorporate the Committee's individual evaluations. The Members would need to identify someone to collect the forms and do the composite or convene in Executive Session. Separate sealed priced proposals are sent separately to Ms. Witt's office. The City Purchasing Department will take into account the price and evaluation forms to consider what is the most advantageous. Members will not know the price. She also noted that until the final decision is made on the RFP process, it is not subject to the Public Records Law and any discussion should occur in Executive Session in accordance with Chapter 30B.

Ms. Allen asked the Members for their suggestions, changes and edits to the RFP which may have been overlooked.

The Members expressed the following concerns:

- Recruitment strategy description for highly advantageous and advantageous are exactly the same on page 8
- Present more than 5-7 highly qualified preliminary candidates for the School Committee's consideration
- Need a firm with specific urban experience
- Important to hire a firm with expertise in community engagement in order to access as large a portion of our community as possible
- Recruitment materials (brochures) shouldn't be weighed the same as the recruitment strategy or the search plan
- Networking is important since the finalists from the last search were not referred by the search firm
- When do we articulate the criteria of the candidate we would like to consider? This doesn't happen until we bring in the firm and work on the language.
- With such an aggressive timeline – how can you determine the capacity that the firm can meet this timeline? One of the criteria on page 9 of the RFP is to meet the timeline.
- It is important that the Committee to evaluate the RFP's be the Committee of the Whole
- Include the diversity, ethnicity and socio-economic status of the Cambridge community in the description of the Cambridge Public Schools

The Chair summarized the Committee's suggestions and edits to the Draft RFP as follows:

- ✓ Include urban district reference; make sure firm has a demonstrated track record in outreach to underrepresented communities
- ✓ Increase potential candidates to a minimum of 8 to 10
- ✓ Add expectation that the firm would need to conduct a number of community meetings and focus groups; put in a minimum number of 15-20 community involved meetings
- ✓ Include that the Committee may decide to interview the firms

Ms. Allen will make the requested edits and submit to the Committee for final review and approval at the May 5th Regular School Committee meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adjourn (5:30 PM).

Judith T. Martin
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Handouts (on file in the School Committee Office):

- Draft Request for Proposals for Executive Recruitment for Superintendent Search Consultant Services
- List of Superintendent Search Firms