

**GREENFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES
Tuesday, April 29, 2014
Greenfield Community College, Greenfield MA
Approved 05.14.14**

Present: Margaret Betts (MB); Maryelen Calderwood (MC); Daryl Essensa (DE); Donna Gleason (DG); William Martin (WM); Francina Wisnewski (FW). **Absent:** John Lunt (JL). **Also present:** Pat Correira, Mass. Association of School Committees; Susan Hollins, Supt.; James O'Shea, superintendent finalist; school staff, citizens, and the press.

I. Call to Order

With a quorum present (MB, MC, DE, DG, WM, FW), Chair Martin called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m. Chris Shores of *Recorder* is audio-recording.

II. Finalist Interview: James O'Shea

Pat Correira introduced James O'Shea, candidate for superintendent.

A. Opening Remarks by Mr. O'Shea.

B. Questions from School Committee members:

- How comfortable and knowledgeable are you with the Extended Learning Program (ELT) and what criteria would you deem critical for continued participation in the \$800K state grant program?
- What is your educational philosophy and how do you see it working with the Greenfield Public Schools and the community?
- What would you do during the first 90 days of the job?
- The practice of outsourcing services is more widespread these days. Some believe this practice saves money, other worry that the practice results in the loss of jobs or in the de-skilling of the teaching profession and that furthers the belief that one ought to run schools like a business. Can you tell me where, within these parameters, your philosophy fits?
- Please offer a brief presentation relating to a School Choice agenda item due for Committee vote to decide to participate or not to participate.
- There are several areas where clear delineation of authority becomes more blurred than clear. For example, several areas touch both policy and administrative operations, and it may not be fully clear about where the school committee's responsibilities end and where the administration's begins. Give me some examples of how you have worked (in any capacity) with your school committees to resolve these potential conflicts.
- During your visit today, what did you learn about our district and how will that information influence your entry plan?
- How much of an emphasis do you plan to place on MCAS when deciding what changes and reforms are needed in Greenfield? Other than MCAS, what measures and factors are most important when deciding on a plan of action?
- In your opinion, is it possible to dismiss a weak staff member? If so, have you done this, and what process did you use?
- In your understanding of zero-based budgeting, what would be the four priorities you would use to determine distribution of resources over several sites?

- If academic success is a function of good classroom teaching, or good instructional tools, or a good environment, or better curriculum, to what extent can you as a superintendent make a difference in each of these areas?
- It's May, you are a new superintendent who has just been made aware of a \$1.9 million deficit, one to which the Town Council is resistant to apply a fix. To add to this, there is a June deadline for providing teachers pink slips, teachers who may not be able to be hired back because of a significant lack of finances. Can you tell me how you might handle this crisis?
- How strongly do you support Pre-K education and funding it and making sure that it is sustainable in the district?
- You've spoken about PD for teachers. What experience have you had with PD for paraprofessionals? What is your vision for them?

C. Closing Remarks from Mr. O'Shea

III. Executive Session

FW move to replace item III. Executive Session with discussion of scheduling for supt appointment. MB 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Superintendent decision

Discussion: Vote planned for Wednesday (tomorrow) evening; some members request more time to reflect, to not vote immediately after 2nd interview. **DG moved to make our decision tomorrow night if possible and follow the schedule. MB 2nd. Motion passed unanimously.**

III. Adjournment

MC moved to adjourn. MB 2nd. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Farber
Recording Secretary