

The Barnstable School Committee met on Friday, December 11, 2015, in the Barnstable Intermediate School Cafeteria. Present were Chair Margeaux Weber, Vice-Chair Chris Joyce, Committee members Stephanie Ellis, Mike Judge and Patrick Murphy. Also present were Bill Butler and Kristen Harmon.

Ms. Weber called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM.

Core Values

Ms. Weber recited the Core Values of the Barnstable School System.

Video or Audio Recording of the Meeting

Ms. Weber reminded everyone that the meeting was being recorded and will be telecast on Channel 18 and 22. Anyone who wished to make a recording of the session must notify the Chair.

Introductory Comments/Report of Superintendent Search Committee

Ms. Weber stated the superintendent search process started about a year ago with a call from Dr. Czajkowski regarding the position with Lexington. It was not worthwhile to start process at that time and the Committee decided to go with an interim plan while the search was conducted at the best opportune time. Mr. Butler agreed to serve as Interim Superintendent. A Superintendent Search Committee was put together along with the consultation services of Paul Hilton and Glenn Koocher. Nine candidates were interviewed and three finalists were named. Mr. Murphy and Ms. Weber did site visits to Fall River and Holliston and Mr. Joyce and Ms. Weber visited Wilmington. The three finalists were interviewed last night.

Report on Visits to Candidates

Fall River

- Ms. Weber stated Ms. Mayo-Brown has had significant challenges in Fall River. They met with teachers, the chair of the School Committee, her leadership team, H.R., Special Education Director, Finance Director, community and business contacts, President of the Fall River Education Association, and all 17 school principals. They spoke of the Learning Walk, where all principals go to a school and make observations and discuss. They spoke about the alternative high school, alternative middle school, an innovation school and a therapeutic day school. Ms. Weber stated they were disliked because they people they were talking to did not want Ms. Mayo-Brown to leave. She came into Fall River as the state was coming in to take over the district. She described herself as bridge builder and they saw that. She is going to do what is best for the kids. From the MTA letter of reference, they stated the collaboration and cooperation is something they have never seen before.
- Mr. Murphy stated the work that has been done in Fall River is as inspiring of an experience that he has ever had. It is not done and not perfect, but the site visit energized him.
- Ms. Weber stated Fall River has 10,400 student and 1,800 employees with a \$130 million budget and an additional \$22 million in grant funds.

Holliston

- Ms. Weber stated Ms. Ahern is ready to take the next step and be a superintendent. She is very bright. On the visit, she and Mr. Murphy met with the Superintendent, School Committee members, the leadership team, high school principal, services student, business director, technology representatives, K12 curriculum foreign language leader, literacy leader, STEM specialist, Holliston Federation of Teachers, parents and the fire chief. Holliston was in a difficult budget situation and Ms. Ahern was integral is working it out and putting the pieces in place to continue the program. She was consistently described as life-long learner. She is a smart woman, passionate and directed with tremendous potential.
- Mr. Murphy stated Ms. Ahern's Superintendent knows what he has in her and expressed that she is at the table at any decision made in the district. Holliston is not as diverse as Barnstable. Their funding level is under the state average. She makes decisions about allocations of resources. Holliston was not happy to have Barnstable there as they do not want to lose a star.
- Ms. Weber stated Holliston has 2,824 students, 425 employees, a \$30 million budget.

Wilmington

- Ms. Weber stated Ms. Burnham is experienced and is ready to move on to a superintendent position. She and Mr. Joyce met with principals, teachers, community member, School Committee, department of public works, Fire Department, her Superintendent and central office staff. The Superintendent had little curriculum experience and Ms. Burnham is the chief academic officer. She is a great listener, accessible, a go to person and problem solver.
- Mr. Joyce stated that Ms. Burnham is highly respected. She created a culture with the teachers and staff that is strong. Ms. Burnham is the face of the district. She hosts of local TV show all about the district. Ms. Burnham is bright and well liked. She is a tireless worker and her work ethic is second to none. She has an accessibility and likeability about her and her passion is recognized. Mr. Joyce enjoyed the experience and seeing how passionately they talked about her.

School Committee Deliberations on Candidates

- Mr. Judge thanked the search committee. He thought there were three phenomenal candidates that were all different. He is looking at them from a parent point of view. His top two candidates were Ms. Mayo-Brown and Ms. Burnham. He liked the experience and the first 90 days plan of Ms. Mayo-Brown. She did her research and homework on Barnstable and referenced many of our reports. He liked her comment about bringing Barnstable from good to excellent. She's going to push back and not be pushed around. Ms. Burnham is very involved in the community and would want to meet with everyone. He liked her family nights where kids and their parents attend. He liked that she brought up the three characteristic that Barnstable was looking for and they described her and her style. Mr. Judge's choice is Ms. Mayo-Brown.
- Ms. Ellis thanked the search committee for getting the School Committee to where they are tonight. The School Committee has three responsibilities: budget, policies and hiring the Superintendent. She feels very fortunate to have these three candidates. Any of the three would be a great superintendent. Ms. Burnham has a passion for curriculum, creative teaching and understands student. She understands what education is all about. Ms. Ahern impressed her with her initial interview. She is intelligent, passionate and makes keen observations. She has a fire in her that is rare. She wants to be in Barnstable and advance her career to better herself and the district. Ms. Mayo-Brown is incredible. She has a wealth of knowledge and her experience surpasses superintendents across state. She has a passion for education and for doing what is right for the children. This is a difficult decision, but her choice would be for Ms. Ahern.
- Mr. Murphy thanked the search committee for three strong candidates. Ms. Burnham will be a fine superintendent. Fit is what it is all about and he does not think the fit is right in Barnstable. There are a lot of districts across MA that would be a better fit. Ms. Ahern is very bright. She could run Barnstable. His concern is how much value she will add from the beginning. We have strong leadership team in Barnstable. We know how to do finance, H.R., curriculum, student services, special education and principals know their jobs. He sees her as a member of the team as opposed to a leader. Ms. Mayo-Brown has been with Fall River for 12 years and 7 years at the Superintendent in one of the top five toughest districts. When she started as Superintendent, Fall River had just let go 100 teachers the month before. There were no financial or H.R. controls and the state was ready to take over. The work she did in Fall River is truly extraordinary. People respect and like working with her. The possibility of having her come to Barnstable is due to political upheaval. Barnstable has to go and get her. If the Committee decided on Ms. Ahern, I would be supportive of her. I know she will become an excellent superintendent. Ms. Mayo-Brown has already done the job and we should hire someone who has already done the job. Ms. Mayo-Brown is a problem solver, knows how to allocate resources and dive into data. All three candidates were asked to provide a closing statement and/or ask questions. Ms. Mayo-Brown was the only one to ask questions and turn the interview into a conversation. She knows how to have public conversations and knows it's important. Mr. Murphy's first choice is Meg Mayo-Brown. If there are others who feel strongly about Ms. Ahern, he would be supportive.
- Mr. Joyce thanked the search committee. He stated he left the interviews last night feeling Barnstable was in a better place. Ms. Burnham is bright and passionate. She is not the right fit for Barnstable, but will be a good superintendent wherever she ends up. Ms. Mayo-Brown is bright and knows what she is doing. She is in a challenging district with a challenging student body. She has moved her district in right direction. She can run our district, but when talking about fit, he does not see Ms. Mayo-Brown as the right fit. Sara Ahern is Mr. Joyce's number one choice to run our district. He loved her passion and energy. She will come into the district

and make an impact and energize and create a culture. Mr. Joyce's vote is for Ms. Ahern. If the decision is Ms. Mayo-Brown, then he will support her.

- Ms. Weber stated that she is the only person who has seen everything in this process. She believes it is a difficult decision between Ms. Mayo-Brown and Ms. Ahern, but she would go with Ms. Mayo-Brown. There is depth and breadth to her experience. Ms. Ahern made a tremendous impression. She could run this district, but it would be heavy lifting in the beginning. Ms. Weber was so tremendously impressed with the site visit to Fall River. Ms. Mayo-Brown is patient, thoughtful and deliberative. She spoke eloquently in the interview. Ms. Mayo-Brown is the stronger candidate for looking forward for the community. She has the respect and affection of her staff. For all the horrific politics that she is going through, the focus has been on the kids.
- Ms. Ellis asked what the process is for moving forward. Mr. Butler stated that there will be a vote to appoint a candidate subject to negotiations of an employment contract. School Committee will go into Executive Session to discuss contract strategies with candidate. The Chair will contact the appointed candidate to see if they are willing to accept the position and then we negotiate. Once there is an acceptable contract, the School Committee will need to approve it in public session.
- Ms. Ellis asked if Ms. Mayo-Brown was still in negotiations with her current district. Ms. Weber stated there is a Fall River School Committee meeting Monday evening that is deadline for their negotiations. We can negotiate over the weekend.
- Ms. Weber asked what would happen should the candidate not accept. Mr. Butler stated the School Committee would reconvene in public session and continue deliberations in public session.

Vote on Superintendent Appointment

- Motion by Ms. Ellis, seconded by Mr. Joyce to appoint Sara Ahern as Superintendent of Schools of the Barnstable Public Schools, effective on a date to be mutually determined, with the understanding that the appointment is contingent upon negotiation of an employment contract acceptable to the Superintendent and the School Committee. Ms. Ellis and Mr. Joyce voted yes.
- Motion by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Judge to appoint Meg Mayo-Brown as Superintendent of Schools of the Barnstable Public Schools, effective on a date to be mutually determined, with the understanding that the appointment is contingent upon negotiation of an employment contract acceptable to the Superintendent and the School Committee. Mr. Judge, Mr. Murphy and Ms. Weber voted yes.
- Ms. Weber asked the Committee if they wanted to make vote unanimous. Ms. Ellis and Mr. Joyce said no.

Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Murphy, roll call vote to go into executive session, and the Committee unanimously approved in a roll call vote to go into executive session – to reconvene in public session – to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with the candidate selected as superintendent and/or to conduct contract negotiations with the candidate.

Closing Comments

The Committee reconvened in public session. Ms. Weber stated the School Committee is in active contract negotiations with Ms. Mayo-Brown and will alert the community as we have developments.

Adjourned 7:02 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jen Kruczek
Executive Assistant