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Framingham Public Schools
Robert A. Tremblay, Ed.D.,
Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Priscila Sousa, Chair • Jessica Barnhill, Vice Chair
Adam Freudberg • Beverly Hugo • William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell • Jennifer Moshe • Valerie Ottaviani
Charlie Sisitsky, Mayor

Farley Building, 19 Flagg Drive, Framingham, MA 01702

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE: JOINT OPEN MEETING MINUTES

DATE AND TIME: June 21, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

LOCATION: City Hall Blumer Room and Zoom

MEETING CALLED BY: Chair Priscila Sousa

PRESENT: Jessica Barnhill
Adam Freudberg
Beverly Hugo
William LaBarge
Tiffanie Maskell
Jennifer Moshe
Valerie Ottaviani
Priscila Sousa
Mayor Charlie Sisitsky

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Robert Tremblay, Superintendent
Lincoln Lynch, Executive Director of Finance and Operations
City Councilors Philip R. Ottaviani, Noval Alexander, Tracey Bryant,
Michael P. Cannon, George P. King, Jr., Janet Leombruno, Christine
A. Long, Leora Mallach, Adam C. Steiner, John A. Stefanini, and
Cesar G. Stewart-Morales

Call to Order

City Council Chair Philip Ottaviani and School Committee Chair Priscila Sousa called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Chair Sousa announced the School Committee members in attendance, and noted that School Committee member Tiffanie Maskell was joining remotely. She said that the meeting is being broadcast live on the Government Channel, and can be viewed Live on Facebook on the Framingham Public Schools Facebook Page. She noted information on how to participate in public comment through Zoom and said that Facebook comments are not the formal way to participate in public comment since there are voice options through Zoom.

Public Comment

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There was no public comment in regards to the Joint Meeting agenda item.

Joint Vote with the City Council to Appoint an Applicant to the District 2 School Committee Vacancy

Ms. Sousa said that all three applicants, David Gordon, Donald Taggart, and Brandon Ward had been interviewed publicly at the June 15, 2022 School Committee meeting. Ms. Moshe said that in order to be transparent she wanted to note that she spoke to the State Ethics Committee, filed a disclosure for Appearance of Conflict of Interest with the City Clerk, and is able to participate and vote in this process. City Councilors asked for information on the Appearance of Conflict that Ms. Moshe filed. Ms. Moshe said that this was on file in the Clerk's Office for anyone's reference.

Ms. Hugo said that Framingham was fortunate for the three candidates, tonight members must think of what the responsibility of the School Committee is, and that she would enthusiastically cast her vote for the most value-added candidate, David Gordon. Mr. LaBarge emphasized the importance of walking the talk of representing the student body and said that he would also be voting for David Gordon. City Councilor Bryant said it was an embarrassment of riches in terms of the three applicants, but in this case she felt the School Committee needs were well rounded out by Mr. Gordon. City Councilor Ottaviani shared his thoughts on each candidate, how he received 7 or so emails in support of David Gordon, and said that his support was for Mr. Gordon. City Councilor Alexander said that the two former School Committee members on the City Council, himself and Councilor Bryant, have a unique view and understanding of the needs and visions of the School Department, and expressed his support for Mr. Gordon. City Councilor Leombruno said that she feels the appointee should be who the School Committee feels is the most qualified to meet their needs. She noted that this time the process is different as the last time it was sudden as her sister (Karen Dempsey, School Committee member) had passed away. City Councilor Cannon said he would vote in accordance with the majority vote of the School Committee. City Councilor Long said she had watched all of the interviews and felt Mr. Gordon's financial background and having young children in the school system made him the right fit. Ms. Maskell spoke to how she felt that ultimately this decision should have been up to the District 2 constituents, that she would be voting in favor of Mr. Gordon as she had during this process during the last vacancy, and expressed her frustrations that he was not voted in the first time by the City Council and School Committee. City Councilor Ottaviani said that he liked to vote for people who back up what they say and do and shared reasons as to why he voted for Richard Finlay the first time, that he hoped whomever was given the seat would run in the next election to keep it, and takes offense to the Council being reprimanded for not voting for Mr. Gordon the first time. Mr. Freudberg said that although his vote is for David Gordon it is not a vote against the other two candidates and expressed how the vote last time was stressful for different reasons and was a sad time. He noted both boards would appoint candidates to the Charter Review Committee in 2023 and they would look at if this is the right process or not to fill vacancies. Councilor Stefanini said that he would be voting for Mr. Gordon because of the reasons Mr. Freudberg stated, there were no bad choices, and they did not need to pull someone down in order to pull someone else up. He noted that special elections cost the community \$30-40K to be held and was a temporary thing. Ms. Maskell expressed concern that within this process the City Council had 11 votes to the School Committee's 8. Ms. Sousa noted

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that they were in grief last time and it was during a time when they were not able to see or grieve with one another (due to COVID). She said that she looked for who would best fill the organizational gaps and would be voting for Mr. Gordon.

School Committee Chair Sousa called upon members in district order to cast their votes;

Beverly Hugo, D1- David Gordon
Jennifer Moshe, D3- David Gordon
Adam Freudberg, D4- David Gordon
Priscilla Sousa, Chair, D5- David Gordon
Valerie Ottaviani, D6- David Gordon
Tiffanie Maskell, D7- David Gordon
Jessica Barnhill, Vice-Chair, D8- David Gordon
William LaBarge, D9- David Gordon

Council Chair Ottaviani called upon members of the Council to cast their votes;

Christine Long- David Gordon
Michael Cannon- David Gordon
Leora Mallach- David Gordon
Adam Steiner- David Gordon
John Stefanini- David Gordon
Philip Ottaviani, Chair David Gordon
Janet Leombruno, Vice Chair David Gordon
George King- David Gordon
Noval Alexander- David Gordon
Stewart-Morales- David Gordon
Tracey Bryant- David Gordon

Chairman Ottaviani noted the combined Council and School Committee vote was 19-0 in support of David Gordon as the District 2 School Committee member. City Clerk Lisa Ferguson swore Mr. Gordon in and congratulated him. Mr. Gordon thanked the other candidates and the members and said he was fortunate to have found his professional niche in finance and in auxiliary work for kids. Councilor Alexander said it was fitting Mr. Gordon was approved on the heels of the Caribbean American Heritage Proclamation as he was of Panamanian descent. City Councilors congratulated Mr. Gordon and gave thanks to the other applicants who had applied, as well as noted that they will continue to make valuable contributions to the City. Mr. Taggart asked and was granted permission to give comments. He congratulated Mr. Gordon and said that he did not remember a time when he was “white-washed” as he had in this process. He noted he would continue to focus upon the City Council and School Committee’s efforts to address the social and emotional needs of students. Ms. Sousa reminded the group to be mindful of language, reiterated her earlier comments about not antagonizing others, and it was not okay to use the word “white-washed”. Mr. LaBarge said that he felt it was fitting if Mr. Gordon join the School Committee at the table to vote upon the motion to adjourn, all in agreement.

Adjournment

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Motion: To adjourn.

Moved: Ms. Hugo

Seconded: Ms. Barnhill

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous (9-0-0)

(Yes: Hugo, Gordon, Moshe, Freudberg, Sousa, Ottaviani, Maskell, Barnhill, LaBarge)

Meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Meeting Materials

Agenda

Memo for District 2 Vacancy