

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special meeting of Thursday, May 20, 2021
6:00 p.m.
Ketchikan High School Library

CALL TO ORDER; ROLL CALL

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough Board of Education met in a **special** session on the 20th day of May, 2021, in the Ketchikan High School Library. Board President Kim Hodne called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The following members were present to establish a quorum and due notice had been published: Board President Kim Hodne; Clerk-Treasurer Bridget Mattson; and Board Members Diane Gubatayao; Jordan Tabb; Paul Robbins Jr., and Nicole Anderson.

Administrative staff included: Board Clerk Kerry Watson.

CITIZEN REMARKS

There were none.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

The advertised purpose of the meeting was to hold an interview with the candidate for interim superintendent and select a candidate. Three interviews were initially scheduled; but two of three candidates had withdrawn from consideration by the time of the meeting.

Interview with Superintendent Candidate

Motion to enter into executive session to interview Melissa Johnson, a subject that tends to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, provided the person may request a public discussion, as provided for by Board Bylaw 9321 and AS 44.62.312

Moved by: MATTSON, Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Board President Kim Hodne asked Melissa Johnson if she wanted the interview to occur in executive session or in public. Ms. Johnson responded that she felt the interview should be in public, for transparency purposes.

As a motion had already been made to enter executive session, the roll call on that motion was taken with all Board members voting against the motion to enter executive session.

President Hodne explained that the Board would ask Ms. Johnson a series of 24 questions. The questions covered various aspects of school district leadership. The last "question" was an opportunity for Ms. Johnson to in return ask questions of the Board. Ms. Johnson asked what the School Board members viewed as the priorities for the next school year; and what they thought needed to be worked on and what the district did well. Board members responded with answers including a need to rebuild trust and relationships with the community; budget management affected by the state and local funding challenges; and moving forward again on initiatives such as the district's Strategic Plan.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion to go into executive session for the purpose of Board deliberation on the candidate, to discuss a subject that tends to prejudice the reputation and character of any person, and the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect upon the finances of the school district.

Moved by: TABB; Second by: ROBBINS JR.

ROLL CALL

**MATTSON, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, TABB, HODNE - ALL AYES
MOTION PASSED**

The executive session began at about 7:04 p.m. and ended at 7:18 p.m.

Resumption of the special meeting

President Hodne stated that no action had been taken.

Motion that the Board of Education appoint Melissa Johnson as interim superintendent.

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: GUBATAYAO

Discussion

Board Member Jordan Tabb stated for the public's benefit that the process is still pursuant to deliberating, offering and accepting of a contract.

ROLL CALL

TABB, ROBBINS JR., MATTSON, GUBATAYAO, ANDERSON, HODNE - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion that the Board of Education enter executive session to discuss terms of the contract, a matter the immediate knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse effect on the finances of the school district.

Moved by: MATTSON; Second by: GUBATAYAO

ROLL CALL

MATTSON, GUBATAYAO, ROBBINS JR., ANDERSON, TABB, HODNE - ALL AYES

MOTION PASSED

It was noted that Ms. Johnson would participate in the executive session with the Board. The executive session began at about 7:20 p.m. after a brief recess. The session ended at 7:39 p.m.

Resumption of special meeting

When the Board re-entered its regular session, President Hodne announced that the Board had given direction by appointing he and Clerk Treasurer Mattson to negotiate the contract with Ms. Johnson. The two officers had also been authorized by the Board to sign the contract upon the completion of its negotiation. If there were any substantial changes to the Board's understanding of the contract terms, each Board member would be contacted through the Board Clerk, said Mr. Hodne. The Board intended for ratification of the interim superintendent contract to occur at the Board's regular meeting on the 26th, he also noted.

BOARD COMMENTS

Board Member Paul Robbins Jr. stated an apology to all three of the initial interim superintendent applicants regarding how the process was handled. He shared his displeasure that the Board had not been able to interview all three individuals, which several Board members had requested. Mr. Robbins Jr. also addressed the manner in which the Board and public found out about the hiring committee's recommendation in a Board meeting. Mr. Robbins said the Board had done a disservice to the administrators involved in the process; and also to the community which he said expected fair and transparent hiring processes. He concluded by stating his confidence in Ms. Johnson's qualifications and capability to lead as an interim superintendent.

Ms. Mattson concurred with Mr. Robbins' statements. She thanked Ms. Johnson for her references during her interview and in her application about building bridges and collaboration. Board Member Mattson said that is exactly what the district needs at this time and she looks forward to working with Ms. Johnson.

Board Member Diane Gubatayao said that she was disappointed in not being able to interview all three candidates. However, she added, she was thankful for the outcome. She said the Board will stand behind Ms. Johnson and that trust can be rebuilt. She also thanked her for holding her interview in public.

Board Member Nicole Anderson thanked Ms. Johnson for stepping forward and applying for the interim superintendent position. Her qualities and skill set will be well utilized in the district, she said. Ms. Anderson also thanked Ms. Johnson for her transparency in the interview that evening.

Board Member Jordan Tabb also referred to the process, stating it should have been more transparent and provided all the candidates the opportunity to be interviewed. He said he appreciated Ms. Johnson leading the district; and shared how she had reached out to him when he became a candidate for a Board seat several years ago. He also indicated he liked her intent to bring people who disagree to the table so they can be heard. Mr. Tabb concluded by noting that the Board is currently challenged with how it will handle COVID for the rest of the year; as schools have been a source of transmission.

Board President Hodne congratulated Ms. Johnson. He said he would not apologize, and referred to the Board's direction that he form a hiring committee of stakeholders. He described the committee's makeup and its process. The Board had tasked the committee with bringing forward a recommendation, and it had done that, he stated. Mr. Hodne said that good work and frank discussion had taken place at that evening's meeting. He said he believes the district will benefit with Ms. Johnson as the interim superintendent.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded for adjournment. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Minutes approved as distributed at the June 9, 2021 regular meeting of the Board of Education.

BOARD PRESIDENT
Kim Hodne