

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING
OF THE TENAFLY BOARD OF EDUCATION
TUESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 23, 2016
HELD AT THE HEGELEIN BUILDING, 500 TENAFLY RD., TENAFLY, NJ

DATE 9/13/16

APPROVED *[Signature]*

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The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Board President Lynne W. Stewart who read the following statement:

“The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right to the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon.”

In accordance with provisions of this act, the Tenafly Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be publicized by having the date, time and place thereof posted at the Borough office, Tenafly Public Library, administrative building, in the local press and on the district’s web site.

On roll call, the following Board members answered present:

Mark Aronson
Sam A. Bruno
Janet I. Horan

April Uram
Lynne W. Stewart

The following Board members were absent:

Sherri Rothstein
Edward J. Salaski
Eileen D. Pleva

The following staff members were present:

Ms. Lynn Trager, Superintendent
Ms. Barbara Laudicina, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Yas Usami, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Ms. Stewart opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

The district advertised the interim Board vacancy term of August 30 – January 5, 2017, due to the unexpired term of Ms. Stephanie Addison-Fontaine, by the following means: a full-page ad for one week in the Suburbanite; public notice in the Record; a Record article; Channel 77; posting on the district’s website; Honeywell Notification; a Reverse 911 from the Borough; and the information was posted on the electronic billboard at Tenafly High School.

The Board reviewed all letters of interest and resumes submitted by seven candidates, and interviews were setup for those candidates who were available on August 23. The meeting was televised for the public and for the Board members who could not be present tonight.

Before the candidate interviews began, Mr. Aronson raised a concern. He stated that since Ms. Rothstein had an unexpected situation arise and was unable to attend the meeting, that left five people to deliberate and only four to vote for the interim trustee on August 30, as Mr. Aronson would be unable to attend the August 30 meeting. Discussion ensued about the process. There was confusion regarding the process and Ms. Trager and Ms. Stewart offered clarification. The Board agreed the five trustees will interview the candidates and come to a consensus, either majority or unanimous. Those trustees who could not attend the interviews can view the taped interviews. The person brought forward by consensus will be on the Board agenda. All trustees present on August 30 may vote for only the person on the agenda. The five trustees in attendance unanimously agreed with the process.

Ms. Stewart explained to each of the four candidates that after they give their opening statements, the Board will ask several prepared questions. The candidates will then be given a chance to make a brief closing statement or ask the Board questions, if they wish.

First candidate: Ms. Natalie Barbanel

Ms. Barbanel stated she is running for the 2-year unexpired term this November election, in addition to applying for the Board vacancy she is being interviewed tonight for. She stated she has years of managerial experience from Citibank, and has a passion for giving back to the community. Ms. Barbanel has two children, one starting ninth grade, and the other a first year college student, and stated she is knowledgeable with the K-12 curriculum process. She has been a consistent and active member in the school district and community. She believes that the use of technology in and out of school is a key challenge for the district, and believes this is being addressed. Her wish is to support the existing programs and continue with the district's success. She expressed that she would like to promote team sports skills in earlier grades. Her volunteerism includes helping at the schools in the library, lunch program and "Museum Moms' Committee," and she has experience as a trustee with Jenna's Rainbow Foundation and Temple Sinai's Sisterhood. Ms. Barbanel expressed that her strengths are her organizational skills, her ability to build relationships and working well with others, is committed to education, and will devote her time to the Board.

Most of the Board's questions were covered in Ms. Barbanel's opening statement. Ms. Barbanel emphasized that she has been very active in the HSA and school activities, and also understands the tasks and responsibilities, including setting policy, that the Board has in order to represent the best interests of the community. She stated she comes from a host of educators in her family and is committed to education. She concluded the interview by thanking the Board and administrators for the opportunity to speak and is very enthusiastic in joining the Board, if she should be chosen.

Second candidate: Ms. Patricia Flynn

Ms. Flynn stated she is an alumnus of the Tenafly school system, has two children in the Tenafly schools, one in 10th grade, and one in 6th grade, and is an involved member of the community. She stated she would bring her experience to the Board from being a volunteer in many school activities in a variety of capacities throughout the years, keeping the best interests of the children at heart. She is an active member of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), and was a Cub Scout den leader for five years. She is presently an assistant scout master, and for six years has been a Chartered Organization Representative for the BSA, as well as a religious education instructor at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel for seven years. In addition, she was a Cultural Arts Representative for Mackay School for six years helping to enrich the curriculum, and served on the Mackay HSA Board as Vice President of class parents. She stated she has good communication and organizational skills and feels her experience and commitment to the students would be an asset to the Board.

In answers to Board questioning, Ms. Flynn expressed that a key challenge that she sees facing Tenafly is to retain and hire excellent teachers who can help maintain and keep up with technology under a fair budget. Ms. Flynn said she is proud of her many years of volunteering, and serving on the Board would be an extension of her volunteerism. She said she ran for the Board previously, as she has been interested in serving the Board before. She stated she felt the Board's responsibility is to give students opportunities to find their passions for future careers, and for the Board to be fiscally responsible. She added that she is in favor of the later start time at the high school and thinks the current Board discussions are headed in the right direction. Ms. Flynn stated her strengths are that she is fair minded, has perseverance, enjoys challenges, is flexible, and can devote the time needed to serve on the Board.

Ms. Flynn asked the Board what qualities they are looking for in a fellow Board member. Ms. Stewart replied she feels it is important that Board trustees be mindful of the needs of every type of child in the district. Mr. Aronson replied that the quality of independence is important to possess, and to persevere with one's convictions.

Third candidate: Ms. Paula Newman

Ms. Newman stated she has been a Tenafly resident for over 12 years, and has three children, two in Middle School, and one in 3rd grade. She has volunteered for the Maugham School HSA in the following capacities: served as the chairperson for six years on the Cultural Arts Committee and co-secretary on the Executive Board for two years; served as chairperson for the 5th grade Yearbook Committee involved in all aspects; for many years a class parent for each child; a co-chairperson for the 6th grade Halloween party; and co-president and secretary for the Kaplen JCC on the Palisades Parents Association Executive Board. Ms. Newman is an attorney and admitted to both the NY and NJ Bars, and has work experience in banking law and tax preparation. Ms. Newman stated that she knows the importance of advanced educational experiences for a child's self-worth, and to become responsible members of the community. She said she would be honored to be part of the Board of Education and work towards supporting the goals for all children to receive an excellent education in Tenafly.

In answers to Board questioning, Ms. Newman expressed a key challenge facing Tenafly and other districts is integrating technology and preparing children for adult life. She stated she is most proud of the years spent volunteering for the Cultural Arts Committee at Maugham School, and was involved with providing many different types of programming to help enhance the curriculum. She stated she organized the information she gathered for future decision making by her predecessors. Ms. Newman stated she felt the Board's responsibility is to manage the budget properly, and make sure the students' needs are met in the most efficient way. Ms. Newman said her strengths are that she is open minded, has legal background, an ability to deal with different personalities, open to others' opinions, and is easy going. She stated it would be an honor to serve on the Board with dedicated individuals caring about the entire school district; and although Tenafly's school system has a great reputation, it is also important to be mindful of understanding the personal needs of the community. Ms. Newman is not working currently and would be available to devote time to the Board.

Ms. Newman asked the Board what they see as the big issues facing the district in the next few months until January. Mr. Aronson replied some key issues are the block scheduling and later start time in the high school, and the outcome of the Tiger Tots program. Ms. Uram added other key issues are website changes, and Chromebooks being added to the high school. Mr. Bruno added that the Board doesn't do the actual work and that it is important for trustees to remember that.

Fourth candidate: Mr. Richard H. Press

Mr. Press stated that when he heard the Honeywell announcement regarding the interim Board seat, he decided he'd like to give the Board the option of his service for this short period of time, as he served as a Board member and would be able to contribute immediately.

In answers to Board questioning, Mr. Press expressed the key challenges that face the Tenafly district haven't changed drastically, e.g.: budget, managing a 2% cap with uncontrollable budget costs that go beyond 2%, labor contracts, and continuing to invest in technology and expand programs in the elementary schools that prepare our students for the future (i.e., STEM and World Languages). The challenges are to fund and continue these goals, to attract good people to Tenafly, keep the curriculum relevant, and expand internships for experiential learning before college.

Mr. Press stated he attended the Tenafly School District and received an excellent education, and is a parent of four children, two students who went through the Tenafly schools K-12, attended college and have great careers; and the other two students are presently in high school doing very well. Mr. Press stated that as a parent, he has vast school exposure for many years and has seen the changes throughout the years...all for the better. He has experience from being a School Board trustee for almost ten years. Mr. Press expressed that he thinks the Board's primary responsibility is to see that schools are well run. School Boards bring broad experiences, perspectives and contributions to conversations that collaboratively, with the superintendent, lead to improvements. The School Board's job is to support the

superintendent and the staff, help set goals, and provide resources to achieve those goals. Mr. Press stated his strengths are his 35 years of business experience and a good background in Technology, and returning to the Board would be a positive experience. He wanted to give the Board the option of bringing an experienced Board member to the table for this short time, and believes the Board should continue with the positive directions they are taking by expanding programs and interaction with the outside world. Mr. Press said he is available to devote the time needed for the Board vacancy.

A motion was made by Ms. Janet I. Horan and seconded by Mr. Mark Aronson that the Board convenes in closed session according to the following:

WHEREAS, the Tenafly Board of Education has been formed pursuant to applicable New Jersey Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Board is charged with the responsibility of performing all acts and doing all things, consistent with law and the rules of the State Board of Education, necessary for the lawful and proper conduct, equipment and maintenance of the public schools and public school property of the Tenafly Public School District; and

WHEREAS, Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10-4-12) permits the exclusion of the public ("Closed Session") from a meeting of the Board in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that circumstances exist for such a Closed Session;

WHEREAS, the Board has found the action described below to be necessary and proper;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board on the date indicated above that:

- 1.) The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action on the Closed Session herein set forth.
- 2.) The subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
 - review candidate interviews and all submitted letters of interest, and recommend a trustee for the interim Board vacancy to be placed on the August 30 agenda for the Board vote.

No formal action will be taken.

The motion was approved by those present. Ms. Sherri Rothstein, Mr. Edward J. Salaski, and Ms. Eileen D. Pleva were absent from the meeting.

The meeting recessed to closed session at 8:27 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned from closed session at 8:56 p.m.

A motion was made by Ms. Janet I. Horan and seconded by Mr. Sam A. Bruno to adjourn the meeting.

The motion was approved by those present. Ms. Sherri Rothstein, Mr. Edward J. Salaski, and Ms. Eileen D. Pleva were absent from the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Yas Usami
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary