

**TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES**

**OF**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**DELIBERATION AND VOTE ON SUPERINTENDENT OF**  
**METHUEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**OF**

**APRIL 29, 2019**

**SUBMITTED FOR THE APPROVAL OF:**

**THE METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**AND**

**THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

**“AN OPEN MEETING ADVANTAGE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF METHUEN”**

**RECORDED BY:**

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**DEIDRE RUNGE, PUBLIC RECORDER**  
**TRANSCRIPT OF RECORDED MINUTES**  
**METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**SPECIAL MEETING**  
**APRIL 29, 2019**

This Special Meeting of the Methuen School Committee was held at Methuen High School, Media Center, and was posted for 6:30 PM.

**ROLL CALL**

Dennis D.J. Deeb (P)  
Jana DiNatale (P)  
Nicholas DiZoglio (P)  
Susan M. Nicholson (P)  
Robert F. Vogler (P)  
Jana Zanni Pesce (P)  
Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson (P)

**MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Dennis D.J. Deeb  
Jana DiNatale  
Nicholas DiZoglio  
Susan M. Nicholson  
Robert F. Vogler  
Jana Zanni Pesce  
Mayor James P. Jajuga

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Deidre Runge, Public Recorder

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE:**

Mayor James P. Jajuga called this Special Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with a quorum of members in attendance, and listed above.

**MOTION:** Member Vogler motioned to accept the agenda as presented

Member Nicholson seconded the motion

**DISCUSSION:** None

**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Mayor James P. Jajuga then asked the audience for disclosure if anyone was live streaming the meeting and Bill Hanefant said, yes I am.

The Mayor then called on Member Nicholson to read her comments to the audience of how she made her selection.

Member Nicholson's Speech:

*"I would like to take a few minutes to share with you the process that I used to help me decide who the best candidate is to be the next Superintendent of Schools in Methuen.*

*I went on the three site visits to Bedford, NH, Weymouth, and Methuen and had opportunities to listen to and ask questions of parents, staff, administrators, city/town officials, central office staff, school committees, etc. I formed early impressions, which I made every attempt to validate*

*I reviewed feedback from the focus groups and the survey from Methuen citizens, which included concerns about*

*Class size and student/teacher ratios*

*MCAS scores*

*Financial and budget concerns*

*Student safety*

*Addressing students social/emotional needs*

*Addressing and improving staff morale*

*And the overall feeling that the educational experiences of students could be richer*

***Methuen residents also indicated that the two most important skills and attributes that they would like to see in the next superintendent are financial management and demonstrated success in improving academic performance.***

*I took all of these factors into consideration in my deliberations. Additionally, I drew on my experience as a superintendent of schools in a very similar school district.*

*At that point, I felt that there were only two candidates who met the criteria to be the next Superintendent of School in Methuen; Dr. Kwong and Dr. McGee.*

*In my heart, I want to recommend Dr. Kwong to be the next Superintendent of Schools in Methuen. After listening to her closing statement last week, no one could doubt her compassion and commitment to this district. At the same time, I believe that she has not always been afforded professional growth opportunities in her role as assistant superintendent of schools that would have prepared her to be a superintendent. My belief was subsequently affirmed through various letters of recommendations, telephone calls, and conversations.*

*It is vitally important to recognize that the underfunding of the school department budget for a number of years contributed in no small way to the increase in class sizes, loss of programs and staff, and reduced educational experiences for our students. We cannot hold Dr. Kwong*

*responsible for a lack of funding while she was the assistant superintendent.*

*To be sure, Dr. Kwong led the district through a very difficult and challenging year. She has earned and deserves our gratitude and thanks. She kept the school district moving in a positive direction. I commend her for the work she did this year and for her many accomplishments.*

*A further review of the feedback from the focus groups and the survey from Methuen citizens indicated to me that Dr. Kwong and Dr. McGee met and/or exceeded the selection criteria in the following areas:*

- *Both have a strong educational background*
- *Both have demonstrated success in working with municipal officials although Dr. McGee's experience is of longer duration*
- *Both have experience in identifying additional funding sources although Dr. Kwong's experience is broader*
- *Both have a strong vision for students and their success*
  
- *Dr. Kwong has come up through the ranks*
- *She is familiar with and understands the demographic profile in Methuen*
- *She has a strong commitment to the Methuen community and the Methuen Public Schools*
- *She is committed to Methuen for the long haul*
  
- *Dr. McGee has demonstrated success in building many budgets*
- *He has demonstrated success in improving academic performance*
- *He has many years of experience in the role of a school superintendent and knows the job well*

*Drawing on my educational experiences and various administrative positions as well as all of the key qualifications and skills of Dr. Kwong and Dr. McGee, I truly believe that TOGETHER, they will be successful in moving our district forward in a positive and high-achieving direction.*

*In my head, I have to do what I feel is best for our students. To that end, I am in support of Dr. Kwong to be the next Superintendent of Schools in Methuen with the understanding that I am recommending that she appoint Dr. McGee as her assistant superintendent. I am asking my fellow school committee members to carefully consider what I have said and to join me in support of Dr. Kwong as the next Superintendent of the Methuen Public Schools and to also recommend that she appoint Dr. McGee as her assistant superintendent.*

*Thank you!"*

Member Vogler – We spent 5 hours at each site visit. I came away very impressed with two candidates. I think Dr. Kwong has done a commendable job. I recommend Dr. Kwong as

Superintendent. I also strongly recommend Dr. McGee as Assistant Superintendent. His knowledge of Curriculum is there. I think it will be a good fit for the kids of Methuen.

Member Zanni Pesce – I was impressed and it came down to Dr. Kwong and Dr. McGee. Methuen is unique. She did not lose a beat when she was handed this position. The emotion we received from Dr. McGee’s staff was genuine. I also would like to see Dr. McGee as Assistant Superintendent.

Member Deeb – I want to take the opportunity to thank MASC. I would of liked to see a bigger pool, although it is clear to me we need a fresh new perspective from outside. I believe Dr. McGee has the knowledge, background and degrees. I think he would be a great fit for Methuen Public Schools.

Member DiNatale – I want to extend my gratitude to Dr. Kwong and Dr. Golobski doing an exceptional job. I will be voting for Dr. Kwong. She is transparent, great leader and great consistency. She brings a lot to the table. I agree Dr. McGee did a lot in Bedford. He brought a level of excellence. I hope he becomes part of the team. He comes with change and I do think the two of them together will work.

Member DiZoglio – this whole process is about passion. My recommendation will only be for Dr. Kwong as Superintendent. Dr. McGee is very qualified behind the scene but we have ELL and a push for MCAS Scores. Dr. Kwong is that person. I look forward to seeing what Dr. Kwong can do.

Mayor Jajuga – I have worked with Dr. Kwong on a daily basis. She has done an outstanding job. Anyone would have to be way above her. I feel very similar that the two will be a good team.

**MOTION:** Member Vogler motioned to appoint Dr. Brandi Kwong as Superintendent  
Member Zanni Pesce seconded the motion

**DISCUSSION:** None

### **ROLL CALL**

Dennis D.J. Deeb (N)

Jana DiNatale (Y)

Nicholas DiZoglio (Y)

Susan M. Nicholson (Y)

Robert F. Vogler (Y)

Jana Zanni Pesce (Y)

Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson (Y)

**VOTE:** 6-1-0 APPROVED (Member Deeb voted no)

Mayor Jajuga appointed a Sub Committee to negotiate a contract with the new superintendent.  
Member DiNatale, Member Nicholson and Member Vogler

**4. ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further business to discuss at this Special Meeting, Mayor Jajuga entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session pursuant to Chapter 30A Section 21(a)(2) to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non union personnel – Superintendent. The Mayor said they would adjourn in executive session and not reenter the Special meeting.

**MOTION:** Member Vogler motioned to enter into executive session at 6:58 p.m.  
Member DiZoglio seconded the motion

**DISCUSSION:** None

**ROLL CALL**

Dennis D.J. Deeb (Y)

Jana DiNatale (Y)

Nicholas DiZoglio (Y)

Susan M. Nicholson (Y)

Robert F. Vogler (Y)

Jana Zanni Pesce (Y)

Mayor James P. Jajuga, Chairperson (Y)

**VOTE:** 7-0-0 UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,  
Deidre Runge, Public Recorder  
Methuen Public Schools