

School District U-46
Elgin, Illinois

May 18, 2018

The Special Meeting of the Board of Education was called to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Educational Services Center, 355 East Chicago Street, Elgin, Illinois. The following Board members answered roll call: Phil Costello, Sue Kerr, Veronica Noland, Melissa Owens, Jeanette Ward, and Donna Smith.

Also present for the business session of the meeting were Chief Executive Officer Tony Sanders and members of the public. Ms. Noland led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Interview of Candidates for Board Vacancy

A. Interview of Candidates for Board Vacancy

i. Thomas Ashton Interview

Mrs. Smith asked: What has been his experience in U-46?

Mr. Ashton stated that he has lived in the District for about 14 years. He has three children that have attended U-46 schools, private schools, and an international online academy. His experience has been excellent in some cases and in others when their needs were not met they found a different path.

Ms. Owens asked: What was his position on school choice and charter schools? Mr. Ashton stated that he believes school choice would open doors for students. In his experience working in Michigan, he has not seen any adverse effects. Mr. Ashton feels that he would need more information to have a valid opinion on school choice or on charter schools in U-46.

Mrs. Ward asked: How would he proactively reach out to engage the public about their concerns or suggestions that may not be represented on the Board's agenda? Mr. Ashton stated that the Board has to be engaged at a local level and he would get involved in a very similar way that the Board is involved now, attending events, meeting with the community, and visit schools.

Ms. Kerr asked: What personal or professional experiences have prepared him to serve as a School Board Member? Mr. Ashton stated that he is a business person with a business background. He believes in the importance of setting smart goals and driving towards an agreed-upon end.

Ms. Noland asked: How will he, as a board member, ensure that the board serve those without the flexibility or the means to advocate for their own children? Mr. Ashton stated that he and his family have been very fortunate. He states that it is incumbent on the Board to find a path that serves the needs of parents who do not have appropriate means. Mr. Ashton feels that

it is up to the Board to allocate funds in a way that helps all. Mr. Ashton thinks he would be sensitive to these needs.

ii. Cecilia Diaz Interview

Ms. Owens asked: What has been her experience in U-46? Ms. Diaz stated that she has had a positive experience. She has four children in the District. She has been involved with the PTO, HPLI, and CAC.

Mrs. Ward asked: What was her position on school choice and charter schools? Ms. Diaz feels that the student is the main priority and if a school is the best choice for them then let them attend it. Students should be able to choose.

Ms. Kerr asked: How would she proactively reach out to engage the public about their concerns or suggestions that may not be represented on the Board's agenda? Ms. Diaz stated that she would make herself available to the community to communicate with her whether it be one-on-one meetings or town halls.

Ms. Noland asked: What personal or professional experiences have prepared her to serve as a School Board Member? Ms. Diaz stated that she has the ability to communicate well with others. She has many years of experience in serving the community and working with diversity. Ms. Diaz stated that she has a Master's degree in accounting and has a very good financial understanding.

Ms. Costello asked: What measures would she support, in order of preference, to achieve a balanced budget: increase taxes; cut programs; cut capital projects; increase class sizes; and issuing debt? Ms. Diaz stated that she would look into the total operations of the District before making a decision. Ms. Diaz feels that increasing class size would not be a good option. She might look at increasing debt because that would minimize the impact on students and teachers. Ms. Diaz stated that she would have to look at all the options before increasing debt, increasing taxes, or increasing class size.

iii. Nazneen Hashmi Interview

Mrs. Ward asked: What has been her experience in U-46? Ms. Hashmi stated that she has two children, one graduated from Elgin Academy and the other graduated from Streamwood High School. Her siblings graduated from Streamwood High School. Ms. Hashmi stated that her experience has been positive and negative. Ms. Hashmi feels that parents need to be trained as well as teachers to compete with other schools.

Ms. Kerr asked: What was her position on school choice and charter schools? Ms. Hashmi favors charter schools. In her experience the students are outstanding.

Ms. Noland asked: How would she proactively reach out to engage the public about their concerns or suggestions that may not be represented on the Board's agenda? Ms. Hashmi stated that she is always reaching out to the community. She would reach out to students as well as parents.

Mr. Costello asked: What personal or professional experiences have prepared her to serve as a School Board Member?

Ms. Hashmi stated that she has a Bachelor's degree in teaching, she has been a substitute teacher, and she has been on the Streamwood Community Relations Committee.

Mrs. Smith asked: How would she engage parents to change the negative experience she had with her daughter? Ms. Hashmi stated that as a Board they need to reach out to the parents and stress how crucial education is. The parents need to be educated and involved.

iv. Kate Thommes Interview

Ms. Kerr asked: What has been her experience in U-46? Ms. Thommes stated that she taught at Eastview Middle School. She has three students in the District, she volunteers in schools, and is a member of the CAC. Ms. Thommes has served on the Standards Based Grading Committee and the Dual Language Committee. Ms. Thommes stated that she currently teaches English as a second language at ECC. She has had an excellent experience in U-46.

Mr. Costello asked: What was her position on school choice and charter schools? Ms. Thommes feels that school choice and charter schools have their place in a District. Ms. Thommes likes school choice. In terms of charter schools, she feels that when they are well run and meet some minimum criteria they can do well and should be given a chance. Ms. Thommes is excited about the Pathways that the District is moving towards.

Ms. Noland asked: How would she proactively reach out to engage the public about their concerns or suggestions that may not be represented on the Board's agenda? Ms. Thommes stated that she would do a lot of what she has seen other Board members do. She would attend events, volunteer in the schools, hold town hall meetings, use of email and Let's Talk.

Mrs. Smith asked: What personal or professional experiences have prepared her to serve as a School Board Member? Ms. Thommes stated that she was a teacher in the District and she continues to teach at ECC. Ms. Thommes has two Master's degrees related to education. She wrote standardized test items

for a company using Common Core standards. She is very well versed in how education works. Ms. Thommes stated that she is an educated member of the community and feels that she is well prepared and qualified.

Ms. Owens asked: What do you feel are the two biggest challenges in the District and how she sees her role in bringing a resolution to those challenges? Ms. Thommes stated that she sees the Pathways as a challenge, a positive challenge. She is very excited about them but she thinks that the District needs to make sure there is a solid plan in place with parent input and that at no point is choice taken away from parents and students. Ms. Thommes stated that she is also very excited about Trauma-Informed Care. Looking at where a student came from and why they are doing the things they are doing the District will be able to help a student be successful. Along with Trauma-Informed Care, the challenge the District will face is secondary care for teachers.

President Smith requested a motion to recess until 7:35 p.m. The motion was made at 7:19 p.m. by Mrs. Ward, second by Ms. Kerr. Upon roll call, yes votes: Mr. Costello, Ms. Kerr, Ms. Noland, Ms. Owens, Mrs. Ward, and Mrs. Smith. No votes: 0. The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

The meeting resumed at 7:35 p.m.

v. Jocelyn Vana Interview

Ms. Noland asked: What has been her experience in U-46? Ms. Vana stated that her experience in the District has been different. She lives in the District but does not have kids yet. Ms. Vana stated that her sister-in-law attended a U-46 school and she has many friends who also attended U-46 schools. Her family and friends have all had positive experiences with U-46 and that was the reason she moved into the area.

Mr. Costello asked: What was her position on school choice and charter schools? Ms. Vana stated that she is for school choice. Sometimes the school down the street might not fit and having a choice is important. Ms. Vana stated that she is neutral on charter schools. She has seen some that are good and some that are not so great. She would like to judge a charter school individually based on its data.

Mrs. Smith asked: How would she proactively reach out to engage the public about their concerns or suggestions that may not be represented on the Board's agenda? Ms. Vana stated that she would attend events, visit schools, and meet new people. Ms. Vana would also use social media and the Let's Talk application.

Ms. Owens asked: What personal or professional experiences have prepared her to serve as a School Board Member? Ms. Vana stated that she studied

non-profit Boards throughout her grad school career. She chairs a Board and has served on a Board for the past 9 years. Ms. Vana stated that professionally she is a finance manager.

Mrs. Ward asked: What is her primary motivation for pursuing a position on the Board? Ms. Vana stated that she doesn't have kids yet but when she does she would like them to have a great school. She also feels that a lot of younger people are running for office now to get their voice heard and she would like to be a part of that. Ms. Vana stated that this District has a very diverse population and she would like to make sure that the programs implemented serve the diversity of the District.

2. Comments from the Audience

Joyce Fountain stated that, as a person that has been in this community for a long time and spent twenty years serving on this School Board, this community is very important to her. Ms. Fountain stated that they have a very important job to do and she feels that they have some individuals that will add to the work of this Board and she encouraged them to be very thoughtful in their deliberations.

3. Closed Session

President Smith requested a motion to move to closed session to discuss the selection of a person to fill a public office, including a vacancy in a public office when the public body is given power to appoint under law or ordinance. The Motion was made at 7:50 p.m. by Mrs. Ward second by Ms. Kerr. Upon roll call, yes votes: Mr. Costello, Ms. Kerr, Ms. Noland, Ms. Owens, Mrs. Ward, and Mrs. Smith. No votes: 0. The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

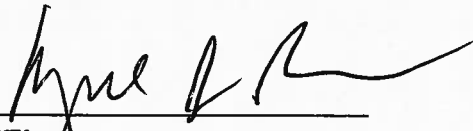
4. Adjournment

Motion by Mrs. Ward, by Mr. Costello, to adjourn the Special Board Meeting of May 18, 2018, at 8:40 p.m. Upon roll call, yes votes: Mr. Costello, Ms. Kerr, Ms. Noland, Ms. Owens, Mrs. Ward, and Mrs. Smith. No votes: 0. The motion carried by a vote of 6-0.

Approved this 18th day of June, 2018.



President



Secretary

