

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

New Lothrop Board of Education
Thursday, June 6, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.
High School Library

Board Members Present: Richard White, Wendy Vincke, Adam Green, Jim Eustace, Joseph Henige, Tim Birchmeier, Ashley Krupp

Absent: Marty Weese, Drew Severn

Others Present: Wayne Wright, Kim Kuchar and 23 visitors

The meeting was called to order by President Richard White at 6:00 p.m. in the High School Library. The pledge to the flag was said.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Motion by Green, supported by Henige to approve the minutes for the regular board meeting dated May 20, 2024.

Motion carried, 7-0.

Correspondence

None

Update

Results of the Formal Complaint Filed against the Board President – Wayne Wright, Interim Superintendent.

Mr. Wright stated that on March 19, 2024, Superintendent Dr. Heather Thompson Luznak filed a complaint of Bullying against Board President Richard White. Dr. Luznak cited Board Policies 1662, 3362, 4362, and 5517, all policies entitled Anti-Harassment, in the complaint to the compliance officer. An investigation ensued. It was requested that a 3rd party complete the investigation. The Attorney firm of the Allen Law Group was hired to conduct the investigation. Attorneys at the “Allen Law Group” conducted a “Fact Finding Investigation” into the allegation regarding the complaint. I have reviewed the fact-finding report prepared by the Allen Law Group and from the report they prepared I cannot find any evidence to substantiate the allegations in the complaint. A certified letter was sent to the Complainant and an email was sent to the Respondent regarding my findings. The policy states the parties have 5 days to respond if they are dissatisfied with the decision and wish to appeal the decision to the Board. The 5-day limit has passed, and I have not heard back from either party so I consider the decision to be final.

Action Item

Motion by Green, supported by Birchmeier to approve the domestic pipe bid from William Walter, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$15,584.00 to be paid from the capital projects, general fund.

Motion carried, 7-0.

Motion by Henige, supported by Green to approve the bleacher inspection quote from Sideline Sports in an amount not to exceed \$7,070.00 to be paid from the capital projects, general fund.

Motion carried, 7-0.

Employee Due Process Hearing - Dan Martin, Thrun Law Firm

Dan Martin stated that on May 10, 2024 the Board voted 6-0 a directive to the Superintendent to provide official transcripts of her 8 degrees by not later than 12:00 noon on May 17, 2024. Second the Board voted 6-0 to call a special meeting for May 17, 2024 for the purposes of a hearing before the board of a list of written charges that she violated both Board Policy 1220 and Section 7 of her employment contract.

She notified HR on May 16 of a leave of absence and the hearing has been postponed until tonight. Yesterday at 9:03 a.m. she extended her leave until June 16, 2024. She did not request closed session this evening, so the board hearing will be in open session this evening. The Board can choose to postpone this hearing until a later date.

Rich White noted he would like to proceed with tonight and for Dan to summarize all for the Board.

Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) collects the application and letter of references and once submits it is locked down (so it can't be edited). Included to them is application, resume and letter of reference. Board President met with her as concerns raised in the community. Board President again requested official transcripts and Dr. Luznak stated that Administrative Guidelines state transcripts not official. This is when the Board President requested we look into the application process with MASB. Things were listed that showed red flags. Dr. Luznak provided two transcripts not the 5. She potentially had 8 different transcripts. Looking at 9 degrees, work experience we notice a significant and some contradictions. For example: Preschool Director in 95-97 when got transcripts from her attorney she didn't even have a degree then. When Thrun investigated this they found via FOIA that she was not even employed by Holly Schools rather employed on that campus. Another is she stated she was a No Child Left Behind creator and consultant in Philadelphia in 2000-2004. NCLB didn't come out til 2001. Further her resume stated she was in charge of 25,000 students and we found that a bit unbelievable because she had no degree at that time. Looking at her degrees that she claimed she had, they didn't align with what she provided transcripts for. Dr. Luznak told the board no about providing official transcripts as you were all issued an email from her, but the content of the email will not be discussed as it stated at the top it was confidential. Rich White asked so she was given a board directive and she didn't follow, is that insubordination.

Joe Henige asked if the district could withhold her last paycheck until she turns her district equipment in.

Action Item

Based upon the Board finding that there is a preponderance of evidence that Dr. Heather Luznak provided false and misleading information as part of her application and resume for the position as the District's Superintendent, which is a violation of both Board Policy 1220 and Section 7 of her employment contract, I move that the Board terminate her employment with the District pursuant to Section 7 of her contract and Board Policy 1220.

Motion by Vincke, supported by Krupp

Motion carried, 7-0.

Visitors

Cindy Gillie – stated that she had 3 questions and at some point would like feedback to these. Is the district going to take any action to recoup what we paid her? If she doesn't return district property, will this be considered theft. Cindy stated she would like to see changes made to policy with the complaint against Superintendent, is the district going to make modifications to the background check process.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Vincke, supported by Krupp to adjourn.

Motion carried, 7-0.

Adjournment at 6:25 p.m.

The next special board meeting will be June 17, 2024 beginning at 6:00 pm in the High School Library.

Adam Green, Board Secretary
New Lothrop Board of Education