

SCRANTON, PENNSYLVANIA

The Scranton School Board of Directors held a Special Meeting for the specific purpose of the Board Vacancy on Monday, December 23, 2019, immediately following the regular board meeting held at Scranton High School, 63 Munchak Way, Scranton, PA 18508.

President Gilmartin called the meeting to order at 8:04pm.

Roll Call: By the Secretary.

Present: Directors Cruz, Dixon, Fox, Hume, McAndrew, Schuster, Yanni and Gilmartin.

Absent: All present.

President Gilmartin announced the purpose of the meeting is for the Board Vacancy.

Public Comment

No speakers signed in to speak.

Mr. Kevin Whalen, the only candidate to apply was given the opportunity to address the board and answer questions from the board.

Mr. Whalen is a father of five in the school district and believes the school board has a tremendous impact on the students. Mr. Whalen thinks he would be a terrific asset to the district and he is confident in his ability to work in conjunction with the board and he is prepared to dedicate the time it takes.

Director Schuster asked Mr. Whalen how the district can improve student academic achievements and staff professional development.

Mr. Whalen responded more time in the classroom and to encourage the teachers with incentives to further their education.

Director McAndrew asked what are the biggest challenges facing public education today.

Mr. Whalen responded that over 70% of the students are referred to as disadvantaged and special education draws a lot of funds away from regular education students.

Director Yanni referred to challenges facing the district and asked what we can do to work on those challenges.

Mr. Whalen said three quarters of the budget is geared toward salaries and benefits and that would be the first place to go to find savings.

Director Hume commented that it is very brave of Mr. Whalen to put his name forward and that the recent election in November put on this board a slate of candidates who campaigned very strongly on the platform of transparency. Ms. Hume added that Mr. Whalen, as secretary of the Scranton Sewer Authority which is currently under investigation by Auditor General DePasquale, Mr. Whalen voted against Mr. DePasquale's investigation then subsequently voted in favor for that. Director Hume asked if Mr. Whalen feels his vote against opening the activities of the sewer authority to Mr. DePasquale's investigation is a good reflection of the commitment to transparency that this board is trying to maintain

December 23, 2019 Special Meeting - Vacancy

and is he at all concerned that if by the worst circumstances the Auditor General's report should be negative, might reflect badly on the conduct of the members of the sewer board and of the authority itself, is he concerned this might taint his activities on the school board if he is appointed this evening.

Mr. Whalen said he enforces transparency but there was no plan and not exactly necessary.

Director Fox asked what would be his biggest challenges as a board member.

Mr. Whalen answered public speaking and he looks forward to the challenges.

Director Cruz asked what he believes are the strengths of the district and why did he chose to send his children to Scranton School District.

Mr. Whalen said he is lucky enough to live near Robert Morris, it's like family there and he has no complaints.

Director Dixon asked what he sees as his responsibility as a school board member.

Mr. Whalen said to stick to his morals and let the rest fall into place.

Director Gilmartin asked if he was faced with a tough decision such as raising taxes or cutting programs what kind of data would he need to help him make his decision.

Mr. Whalen said everything is based on math.

At this time President Gilmartin asked for a motion to appoint Mr. Whalen. Director Yanni made a motion, seconded by Director McAndrew.

ON THE QUESTION:

Director Yanni thanked Mr. Whalen and respects him very much for coming forward, having done so herself and if he is not appointed this evening, encouraged him to run for school board because for her it was a great way to learn what is involved in a board members responsibility.

Director Gilmartin agreed adding that he should be commended for coming forward.

Motion failed with two (2) affirmative and six (6) negative votes. Directors Cruz, Fox, Hume, McAndrew, Schuster and Gilmartin voted in the negative.

Discussion was held regarding re-advertisement for the vacant seat. Applications would be accepted until Noon on January 2, 2020 and will advertise for Mr. McAndrew's vacant seat on January 6, 2020.

There being no further business a motion to adjourn was made by Director McAndrew, seconded by Director Schuster and the meeting adjourned at 8:26PM.

By: _____