

Minutes
Board of Education Special Meeting
August 29, 2018
7:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: James Chakulski, Jr., David Crim, Linette Dooley, Joanne Prague Doyle, Chairman Christopher Lent, Gary Littlefield and Kathy Tolsdorf

Others Present: Alyssa Gwinnell-Principal, Barbara Wilson-Student Services Director, Jennifer Hill-Assistant Principal, Beverly Ciurylo-Finance Director, Tom Doyle, Deb Dupuis, Brenda Morey and Christine Sposito

I. Call to Order – Chairman Lent called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Comments from the Audience (Bylaws of the Board #93000)

Chairman Lent stated the purpose of tonight's meeting is to elect Ms. Maria E. Geryk to the position of Superintendent. Ms. Geryk comes to Columbia from the Central Berkshire (MA) schools where she served most recently as Director of Student Services. Prior to that she served for about seven years as Superintendent of Schools in Amherst, Pelham, and the Amherst-Pelham (MA) Regional Schools, one of the most highly regarded systems in that state.

Ms. Geryk is deeply passionate about the growth of each child and creating system supports that encourage that growth. She encourages meaningful collaboration with colleagues, families, students and community members to provide exceptional educational opportunities for all students. She hopes to bring a highly optimistic, dedicated, collaborative approach to her leadership of Horace W. Porter School.

Ms. Geryk holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Westfield State University and a Master's of Education and Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study from the University of Massachusetts. The Columbia Board of Education is delighted to welcome Ms. Geryk to the community. She expects to begin in the role on October 1.

Chairman Lent opened the floor to comments from the audience.

Tom Doyle, Co-President from the Teachers' Association, welcomed Marie Geryk.

IV. Action Items (Discussion and Action)

- a. Elect Ms. Maria E. Geryk to the position of Superintendent of Schools for the Columbia School District

Mr. Littlefield MOVED, Ms. Prague Doyle SECONDED to elect Ms. Maria E. Geryk to the position of Superintendent of Schools for the Columbia School District.

Discussion:

Ms. Tolsdorf stated she is very pleased to get someone with such broad experience and welcomed Ms. Geryk.

Approved 10/1/2018

Chairman Lent reiterated the point of Ms. Geryk's wide range of skills and knowledge as he welcomed her. He appreciates having someone with her experience and ability. The process took a little over four months and there were many great candidates. Board of Education members committed a lot of time to prepare, review resumes and other application materials, interview, and follow up with reference checks as part of this process. Ms. Geryk will do a great job as she has many of the attributes the community identified as desirable in the survey.

Ms. Tolsdorf agreed that this was not an easy decision, in some ways, due to the high number of very qualified candidates.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

Mr. Littlefield MOVED, Ms. Tolsdorf SECONDED to authorize Board of Education Chairman to submit a letter to the Commissioner of the State of Connecticut requesting a waiver for Ms. Maria E. Geryk to act in the capacity of Superintendent, pursuant to CGS 10-157.

Discussion:

Chairman Lent explained statute 10-157. We are required to inform the Commissioner of our intended hire. The Board has already been in contact with Patty Wilson from the State, who says qualifications criteria has been satisfied. The other option would be to apply within the shortage area permit, which would require Ms. Geryk to take two courses within a year. Based on her experience which includes being a Superintendent in Massachusetts, a waiver would be the Board's recommended course of action.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

Mr. Chakulski, Jr. MOVED, Mr. Littlefield SECONDED, to authorize the Board of Education Chairman to enter into an employment contract with Ms. Maria E. Geryk as the Superintendent of Schools for the Columbia School District, pursuant to the mutually agreed upon terms and conditions on August 25, 2018 per Ms. Maria E. Geryk, Christopher Lent and Joanne Prague-Doyle.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

Ms. Geryk expressed her pleasure in this opportunity and is looking forward to working with the Columbia school district. She appreciates the selection process which was rigorous. Ms. Geryk believes she will be able to work collaboratively with the community and many great things will be accomplished. On a personal note she shared the fact that she dropped her daughter off at university in Montreal, driving home the fact that time does not stand still. She is very much looking forward to meeting and working with staff, families, and community members.

Mr. Crim MOVED, Mr. Littlefield SECONDED to adjourn.

MOTION CARRIES 7:0

The Board adjourned at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Tolsdorf, Board Secretary