

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

Special Meeting

MINUTES

November 3, 2014

President Haas called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the board room of the FNSBSD Administrative Center at 520 Fifth Avenue. The special meeting was called to discuss the superintendent search and hold an executive session for a student discipline matter.

President Haas read the district's mission statement: *"Our mission is to provide an excellent and equitable education in a safe, supportive environment so all students can become productive members of a diverse and changing society."*

Present:

Heidi Haas, President  
Wendy Dominique, Vice President  
Lisa Gentry, Clerk  
Sue Hull, Member  
Michael O'Brien, Member

Absent:

Allyson Lambert, Treasurer  
Sean Rice, Member

Staff Present:

Dr. Karen Gaborik, Interim Superintendent  
Shaun Kraska, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education  
Sandra Kowalski, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education  
Traci Gatewood, Executive Director of Human Resources  
Peggy Carlson, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Janet Cobb, Executive Director of Technology  
Johanna Carson, Director of Public Relations  
Helen Clark, Director of Federal Programs  
Dan Domke, Director of Career Technical Education  
Ivory McDaniel, Investigations Specialist  
Elizabeth Schaffhauser, Hearing Officer/Employment and Education Opportunity Director  
Sharon Tuttle, Executive Assistant to the Board of Education

**Public Testimony** [0:00:30]

Mario Gatto, 64 Pepperdine Drive, Ben Eielson Junior-Senior High School principal, spoke to the superintendent search and supported the board appointing Dr. Gaborik as superintendent. Mr. Gatto believed there was no one more competent to run the district than Dr. Gaborik. With everything the district had been through over the past year and the many initiatives and challenges still facing the district, he felt Dr. Gaborik was the right person for the job. Mr. Gatto did not believe the district needed to spend thousands of dollars recruiting when there was already someone within the district. Mr. Gatto recognized one of the board's most important duties was to hire a superintendent and in this case, the board had an easy decision.

**Superintendent Search** [0:03:30]

The board considered two options for hiring a superintendent for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District. The board considered conducting a full search, which had averaged approximately \$40,000 each for the past two searches, which included relocation expenses for each of the newly hired superintendents. The board also considered the option of making a direct appointment of Dr. Karen Gaborik, who had been serving as interim superintendent for the past seven months.

## **Superintendent Search** (continued)

Board discussion ensued. All board members present, with the exception of Mr. O'Brien, voiced support for the board making a direct appointment of Dr. Gaborik and its intent to extend a contract at the November 18 Regular Meeting.

Mr. O'Brien's objections centered on the need for full transparency of the process and to address any lingering concerns about Dr. Gaborik's involvement in the Fowlkes case. He did not believe the community had been assured Dr. Gaborik had not been involved. Mr. O'Brien stated he did not know Dr. Gaborik, but the community needed to be assured and any lingering doubts erased. Dr. Gaborik needed to have the full confidence of the board.

President Haas stated the investigation had cleared Dr. Gaborik of any involvement and the board had put that information on the public record. Dr. Gaborik was well respected and supported by her staff, her peers, and community partners. Her skill set and depth of knowledge regarding education and the district had been proven. The direct appointment of Dr. Gaborik would allow for the continuity of leadership, which the district needed. The Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB) told the board at its October 11 work session that the applicant pool was scarce. They felt the district had a known entity in place and a search may not be a good use of funds.

Mrs. Hull wanted to go on record that the board initially had the same concerns as Mr. O'Brien but through the investigation, Dr. Gaborik was found to have had no fault. The board was united in their decisions regarding the issues over the spring, including the hiring of Dr. Gaborik as interim superintendent. Under normal circumstances, Mrs. Hull said she would agree with Mr. O'Brien, but seeing the challenges the board and district had faced over the spring, a full search would not be a good utilization of resources.

Mrs. Dominique spoke in support of Dr. Gaborik. The board had hired two out of state superintendents over the past five years. Dr. Gaborik was a home-grown product of the school district. She encouraged public comments; she had heard both good and bad.

Mrs. Gentry also supported Dr. Gaborik and liked the communication changes Dr. Gaborik had made within the district.

DOMINIQUE MOVED, GENTRY SECONDED, THAT THE BOARD'S INTENTION IS TO APPOINT DR. GABORIK AS SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS WITH A CONTRACT BEING OFFERED AT THE NOVEMBER 18, 2014 MEETING.

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE. 4 AYES (HULL, GENTRY, DOMINIQUE, HAAS) 1 NAY: (O'BRIEN)

Board members, while in favor of an appointment, asked and encouraged public comments and input over the next couple of weeks regarding the hiring of a superintendent. The final determination would not be made until the November 18 Regular Meeting.

## **Executive Session** [0:21:35]

An executive session was called to consider a student discipline issue.

GENTRY MOVED, DOMINIQUE SECONDED, TO CONVENE IN EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS A STUDENT DISCIPLINE ISSUE THAT COULD TEND TO PREJUDICE THE REPUTATION AND CHARACTER OF ANY PERSON, PROVIDED THE PERSON MAY REQUEST A PUBLIC DISCUSSION; AND MATTERS WHICH BY LAW, MUNICIPAL CHARTER, OR ORDINANCE ARE REQUIRED TO BE CONFIDENTIAL.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE CONSENT. 5 AYES (O'BRIEN, HULL, GENTRY, DOMINIQUE, HAAS)

**Executive Session (continued)**

The board convened to executive session at 5:52 p.m.

The executive session adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

**Student Discipline** [0:22:09]

HULL MOVED, GENTRY SECONDED, TO:

PLACE STUDENT 11-03-14-01 ON LONG-TERM SUSPENSION FOR THIRTY (30) SCHOOL DAYS TO BE SERVED CONSECUTIVELY WITH A TEN (10) DAY SHORT-TERM SUSPENSION; FURTHER, STUDENT SHOULD ENROLL IN THE SMART PROGRAM AND STUDENT MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO RETURN TO SCHOOL ON DECEMBER 9, 2014.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE. 5 AYES  
(DOMINIQUE, O'BRIEN, HULL, GENTRY, DOMINIQUE, HAAS)

**Board Comments/Discussion** [0:22:31]

President Haas spoke to the issue of air quality as it affected district schools. There were several schools with poor air quality. President Haas would be checking with the borough on what might be done regarding air quality. She had heard there might be an ordinance change coming.

The meeting adjourned at 6:02 p.m.