

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING—April 28, 2008
Distance Learning Lab, Middle School

PRESENT

Tracy Driscoll, Chair
Margaret Matthews, Vice Chair
David Roberts
Thomas Ryan
Margaret Connolly
Joanne Flatley
John Healy

ADMINISTRATION

June M. Doe, Superintendent
Cynthia Kelly, Asst. Superintendent
Clare Sullivan, Principal

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Jacqueline Chen

Convened: 6:30 PM

Adjourned: 7:05 PM

Ms. Doe opened the meeting and congratulated Ms. Driscoll and Mr. Ryan on their re-election to the School Committee.

REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

Ms. Doe requested a nomination for the chair.

Ms. Matthews nominated Ms. Driscoll. Ms. Flatley seconded the nomination.

Ms. Doe asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. Ms. Doe asked if there was any discussion related to the nomination.

Ms. Matthews read a prepared statement explaining her decision not to seek the role of chair. She made clear that she was responsible for this decision. She said Ms. Driscoll did not initiate her decision to not seek the chairmanship or to nominate her to remain in the position. She stated that this decision evolved out of her other responsibilities and a period of reflection.

Ms. Matthews stated that she is committed to the union negotiations and it was one of her goals as a School Committee member to rebuild that relationship. She said she has served on the negotiation team for two new units and is actively engaged in Unit A negotiations. She said the role of the chair is the arbiter and, while there is no overt conflict of interest in doing both, she felt that it would be prudent to select one over the other. She stated that she has much invested in the negotiations and would like to pursue that.

Ms. Matthews said she gave due consideration to whom she thought would be the best person to serve as chair. She said some did not want to serve and each expressed confidence in Ms. Driscoll. She said the committee is working well together and two years in the role is not unprecedented. She thanked her colleagues for their time and counsel and said she is happy to nominate Ms. Driscoll.

Mr. Ryan agreed that Ms. Driscoll has done an outstanding job in the role and Ms. Matthews has done an excellent job in her role as vice chair. He said that he feels strongly, nevertheless, that it is healthy for the chair to change from year to year. He said having the vice chair assume the role of chair is a practice that has served the committee well. He said there is no need to breach the practice at this time and he would be voting no. He also stated that this perspective should not be reflective of a lack of confidence in Ms. Driscoll.

Mr. Healy thanked Ms. Driscoll for her work over the past year as the chair. He said he also believes in change and feels strongly that although Ms. Driscoll and Ms. Matthews have done a good job that change in leadership is necessary. He stated there are seven capable board members and he would also be voting no.

Mr. Roberts stated that being chair is a daunting responsibility. He echoed Mr. Ryan's and Mr. Healy's comments about change being good. He said he was chair for two years and when the new chair took over the format of the meetings was changed, and that was for the good of the committee. He said he would also be a no vote, but that was no personal reflection on Ms. Driscoll.

Ms. Flatley said she would be supporting Ms. Driscoll for the same reasons Ms. Matthews provided. She said there is a true respect among the members and that has been fostered by Ms. Matthews and Ms. Driscoll. She said there is a precedent for two years in the chair's role with Mr. Roberts, Mr. Mellon on the Finance Committee and John Bethony. She said she gave a lot of thought to it and she feels this is the best scenario for the board.

Ms. Connolly stated that she has given this a lot of thought as well and also supports Ms. Driscoll. She said it has been a good working year, the members get along and the committee was kept informed.

On the nomination vote:

Mr. Roberts – no, Mr. Healy – no, Ms. Flatley – yes, Ms. Connolly – yes, Mr. Ryan – no, Ms. Matthews – yes, and Ms. Driscoll – yes.

The vote carried and Ms. Driscoll was nominated as the chair.

Ms. Driscoll said the chair's role is not political. She stated that Ms. Flatley and Ms. Matthews are stepping aside for the good of negotiations. She said that her own agenda would be put aside to make sure the board is heard.

Ms. Driscoll requested a nomination for vice chair.

Ms. Connolly nominated Ms. Matthews for vice chair. Ms. Flatley seconded.

Mr. Ryan asked Ms. Matthews what her plans for next year are. Ms. Matthews said they would have to wait to see. She reiterated that the decision was hers and she is hoping that they successfully settle the Unit A contract.

Mr. Healy stated that he would vote no on this nomination as well for the same reason he gave for Ms. Driscoll's nomination. He said change is necessary. He said he has tremendous respect for Ms. Matthews, but wants to be consistent in applying his belief.

Mr. Roberts stated he intended to vote for Ms. Matthews.

Ms. Driscoll stated there is no policy for the reorganization process.

Ms. Matthews thanked the committee for their candid comments. She said this is part of the open meeting law and the beauty of the system is that they are not always going to agree. She was satisfied to hear the positive remarks about the content of their work. Ms. Flatley remarked that there is not always going to be unanimous agreement.

On the nomination for vice chair, it was voted:

Mr. Roberts – yes, Mr. Healy – no, Ms. Flatley – yes, Ms. Connolly – yes, Mr. Ryan – no, Ms. Matthews – yes, and Ms. Driscoll – yes.

Mr. Roberts asked if the Budget Subcommittee would remain the same until after Town Meeting. Ms. Driscoll said that the Budget Subcommittee would change as of July 1. She said the School Council liaisons would be effective in September.

The Budget Subcommittee would be composed of Mr. Ryan, Ms. Flatley and Mr. Roberts.

The Policy Subcommittee would comprise Ms. Matthews, Mr. Healy and Ms. Connolly.

There was no expressed interest in the TEC Board of Directors.

The Unit A Negotiation Team would include Ms. Matthews and Ms. Flatley.

The Finance Committee would be composed of Ms. Connolly, Mr. Healy, Ms. Matthews and Mr. Ryan.

The School Council Liaisons are as follows:

- High School – Ms. Driscoll
- Middle School – Mr. Ryan
- Avery School – Mr. Roberts
- Greenlodge School – Ms. Matthews
- Oakdale School – Ms. Flatley
- Riverdale School – Ms. Connolly
- ECEC – Mr. Healy

Ms. Connolly said she would serve on the Council of Aging if no one else was willing to assume that designation.

Ms. Driscoll stated that they received Mr. Wofford's resignation from the School Building Rehabilitation Committee. She said they would appoint Mr. Lawlor to replace him. She said Mr. Roberts has been serving on the committee. Ms. Connolly expressed an interest in serving as well.

Ms. Matthews and Mr. Ryan were appointed to write the School Committee's goals.

Ms. Flatley and Mr. Healy are writing the Superintendent's goals.

Mr. Ryan is serving on the Master Plan Committee.

Ms. Walko commented as a parent that she is witnessing a district upswing. She said it is healthy to see the disagreement on the board and the committee should not vote tradition for the sake of tradition. She expressed confidence in both Ms. Driscoll and Ms. Matthews.

Mr. Ryan moved, seconded by Ms. Matthews, and it was

VOTED: to adjourn.