

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, November 17, 2011
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Jen James, Carol Perkins (Boston Representative). Also present: Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).
Absent: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services), Lisa Pizarro (Hanscom Civilian School Liaison Officer).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass reminded all to attend the Middle School play November 17 and 18.

Ms. Glass and Mr. Schmertzler met with the district's faculty to discuss the search for a new superintendent. Ms. Glass enjoyed meeting them and telling them how they could get involved, explaining that the meeting was the start of a dialogue. The group brainstormed about what makes the district unique and what is needed to move the district forward. Ms. Glass will summarize the 160 pages of feedback and use it for the search.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$1,881,194.42 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$671,882.92 for a total of \$2,553,077.34. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Sander moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Glass seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. Review Process and Questions for Consultant Interviews

Document: Questions for Interviewing Superintendent Search Firms, dated November 16, 2011

Ms. Glass said each group needs to be asked the same questions, but the Committee can follow up on the search firm's answers. Each firm will have 45 minutes, consisting of a 5-10 minute introduction, followed by the Committee's questions.

Mr. Creel mentioned that the Committee will score each firm after the interviews, receive the price proposals, deliberate, and vote on a firm tonight.

C. Interview Consultants for Superintendent Search

Documents: 1) Technical Proposal and Description of Services, Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates, Rosemont, IL; 2) Executive Search Services, Proposal to Lincoln Public Schools, Future Management Systems, Inc., Beverly, MA; 3) Proposal to Lincoln Public Schools, New England School Development Council, Marlborough, MA

Ms. Glass welcomed John Connolly and Al Argenziano of Hazard, Young, Attea and Associates [HYA] of Rosemont, IL. Dr. Connolly and Dr. Argenziano are locally based. While HYA is nationally-based, HYA recently found superintendents for Newton, Marblehead, and Amherst-Pelham. They have a large network of contacts, and they actively recruit candidates and do not rely on sending out advertisements.

Dr. Argenziano was a superintendent in Somerville, a school with METCO students. He also worked with Department of State schools.

HYA would involve all communities in the search. Dr. Connolly said there are four skills for the person to have: 1) quality of their passion; 2) facilitator of community vision; 3) accountability; 4) courage to make the tough decisions.

They would meet with focus groups of whatever makeup the Committee asked, including open forums and online responses. The leadership profile would come from the feedback received at these meetings, and it would be compiled before they started to look for a candidate.

Dr. Connolly said that most good candidates are not applicants, and this is the place where their network and pool would be tapped. They provide the leadership profile to the search committee, and they interview 20-25 people. After those interviews, they give the School Committee the top five people. While they check references that candidates give them, they also talk to people in their network. They recommend search committees with 6-7 people, larger committees are more challenging.

What mistakes have search committees made? When the members don't do their homework, and when the confidentiality of candidates is broken. The more people on the search committee, the more difficult it is to keep it confidential before finalists are chosen.

They have colleagues in other districts, and they check references. They conduct national background checks on the finalists. If the new superintendent does not work out after a year, they will search for another at no cost to the district. They do not allow clients to apply to multiple districts with which they are working.

HYA was comfortable with the timeline for finishing the search. Examples of problems are with dysfunctional School Committees, and Dr. Connolly did not think that Lincoln was one.

The district is a challenge and an opportunity for the right person, and a thorough leadership profile is a tool to find that right person. The search is the Committee's, and HYA will give them the number of finalists they want.

Ms. Glass thanked them for the interview.

Ms. Glass welcomed Lyle Kirtman and William Garr of Future Management Systems, Inc. of Beverly, MA. Dr. Christopher Martes, not in attendance, would also help with the search. FMS has worked with Weston, Lexington, Wayland, Manchester, and Essex. They limit the number of superintendent searches to three or four per year for different types of communities. They work with all community members and develop a leadership profile using the Myers-Briggs Inventory. They "deeply recruit" candidates, many of whom are not actively looking to move.

Mr. Kirtman explained that Lincoln is complex with METCO and Hanscom, and it affects the skills the person will need to deal with the entire community. FMS meets with focus groups to determine the leadership profile, which lists the competencies and characteristics needed for the district. Once the profile is determined, they find and recruit people who fit that profile. Recruiting gives them a larger pool to select from, and while they recruit nationally, they find that those from out of town usually do not stay for a long time in their new positions.

Mr. Kirtman said mistakes are made when the screening committee listens to only one person and makes early judgments about applicants. Mr. Garr noted that candidates who do not tell the whole truth, committee members who make too many reference calls to current employers, candidates and committees unable to negotiate a contract can all be problems. They collect information on applicants from Google searches, talking to many candidates, maintaining relationships with many people. The final six candidates are given personality inventories, and FMS conducts deep reference checks without using letters of reference. They ask references how the candidates deal with the people who work in their offices, such as are they respectful to colleagues and subordinates? Do they return phone calls?

FMS will market the positive relationship with the School Committee. Lincoln needs to be very honest about what it's looking for in a superintendent. The Screening Committee should comprise 8-12 people, and they need to attend all the meetings.

Ms. Glass thanked them for the interview.

Ms. Glass welcomed Arthur Bettencourt, Carolyn Burke, and Joseph Connors of New England School Development Council [NESDEC] of Marlborough, MA. They are completing a search in Norwell and have done searches for Sudbury and Hopkinton. NESDEC is a not-for-profit organization with national recognition that concentrates on New England and focuses on client needs. They actively recruit with a pool specific to each search. They are in a network of study councils that shares vetting resources. NESDEC collects data through focus groups, works with the School Committee to create a profile, and focuses on the candidate that is the best fit.

Dr. Bettencourt noted the outreach needs to be comprehensive. They keep the community informed and expect involvement from them. The screening committee should be comprised of 11-13 members. While networking to find the right candidates, they look for information that is unexpected or small incidents at current places of employment that might not ordinarily be available. NESDEC's

network includes the associations of superintendents, teachers and those aspiring to be superintendents. All applications come to the screening committee.

Dr. Bettencourt reiterated that the screening committee has to maintain confidentiality, does not prioritize the applicants, and is not the body that hires the superintendent. NESDEC's entire staff goes beyond references to find out information on the candidates. There has been overlap with NESDEC's clients and candidates, and he noted Lincoln is a little late in starting its search and will compete with other districts.

The position in Lincoln is an educator's dream, and the Committee will have to be honest about the expectations. Dr. Connors said they need to look at the person's style and skills.

Ms. Glass thanked them for the interview.

D. Discussion and Vote to Select Superintendent Search Firm

Document: Superintendent Search Consultant—RFP Scores, dated November 14, 2011

Ms. Glass summarized the references from districts that used each firm, and each firm would do an able job. The references said that the strength of FMS was their work with the community and seeking out those who would not put themselves in the applicant pool. NESDEC was very organized with a more traditional approach to finding candidates, and they do many searches. HYA controlled the process more at the start and have a more national focus.

Ms. Glass liked the style of FMS, Inc. They recruited Mr. Brandmeyer and know Lincoln well. Mr. Creel noted that the person who would be the lead has only worked with them for two years and will not have the same Lincoln background. Ms. James noted that FMS has handled Lincoln well.

Mr. Christenfeld was concerned with HYA's control of the process at the beginning. The firm would control the process of looking at applications until there were 5-6 finalists. He did not see that working well in Lincoln and Mr. Sander concurred.

Ms. Glass asked the Committee to rank the interviews with the rubric. They were not comparing the three to each other when they ranked each firm. Mr. Creel reminded them that they were to find a good fit with the Committee.

HYA was most expensive. FMS' and NESDEC's prices were essentially the same, but they needed to determine the travel costs to make sure the Committee was not paying for local travel and would pay only for travel if needing to send them away. The Committee needed to know the anticipated costs for the assessments of three finalists

Ms. Glass moved, and Ms. James seconded, the motion to tentatively enter into a contract with Future Management Systems, Inc. of Beverly, MA to assist in the superintendent search, subject to clarifications and additional information. The Committee voted unanimously to enter into the contract with FMS, Inc.

Ms. Glass will contact the firms with the Committee's decision.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 10:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary