

PLAINFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION
Special Meeting
January 13, 2014
6:30 p.m.
ECC Conference Room

PRESENT: Douglas Smith, Chair; Kathleen Barry, Audrey Lemieux, Christi Haskell, Mike O'Neil, Cynthia Arpin, Cheryl Hull, Kenneth Di Pietro, Superintendent; Anne Littlefield, BOE Attorney; Paul Sweet, Town Selectman; Tammy St. Amour, Recording Secretary

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Discussion regarding attorney-client privileged written communication:

MOTION: Ms. Haskell moved to go into executive session at 6:31 p.m. to review the attorney-client privileged information with their attorney. The Chair asked the the Board's attorney, Anne Littlefield along with Mr. Di Pietro and Mr. Sweet remain for the session.

SECOND: Ms. Barry

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Barry moved to amend the motion to also include the recording secretary in the session.

SECOND: Ms. Haskell

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Lemieux moved to come out of executive session at 6:40 p.m.

SECOND: Ms. Barry

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

2. Discussion regarding performance of a public official: Mr. Smith explained that Mr. Benoit indicated that he may not be able to attend the meeting this evening do to work commitments. Attorney Littlefield said that the meeting should still go on. The Board can provide Mr. Benoit with another opportunity to meet with the Board.

Mr. O'Neil stated that he thought that there was an inaccuracy in the report when it referenced the fact that Mr. Benoit said that he was going to go to the Town Clerk and resign his position on the Board. Mr. O'Neil said that he did not recall Mr. Benoit saying that he was going to resign but rather that others thought he should resign. Several of the other Board members present indicated that they recall him saying that he planned to resign.

3. Possible action pertaining to report of independent investigator: Ms. Littlefield stated that the first two recommendations by the investigator should be reviewed with Mr. Benoit to make him aware of the violation to policies and ethics codes and to address the issue of a hostile

environment. She also stated that the board should address point number 5 with him as well to ensure that there is no retaliation from him against the superintendent, or anyone, for bringing forth the complaint.

She stated that Board members have limited options on how to deal with the misconduct of an individual board member. She said that some of the options are to remove them from committees, etc., but they do not have the authority to remove a member from the board.

She suggested that a memo be issued to both the Board and Superintendent with regard to issue of retaliation.

Mr. Sweet cautioned the Board regarding their use of technology when communicating with each other. He said that every document becomes a public record. He said that it is not necessary to communicate so frequently. If issues arise, they should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Attorney Littlefield said that the issues of conflict with regard to his family members should be brought forward to the ethics board.

MOTION: Mr. O'Neil moved that the Board of Education directs that an item be placed on the Board's agenda to permit Mr. Benoit with the opportunity to respond to the Investigative Report prepared by Attorney Stohler. Further, the Board authorizes the Board Chair, with the assistance of legal counsel, to correspond with Mr. Benoit relative to the investigation report and next steps with respect to same. The Board also authorizes the Board Chair to take appropriate steps to address any concerns about retaliation as may arise in connection with this investigation.

SECOND: Ms. Barry

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

4. Discussion regarding performance of a public employee (Superintendent of Schools):

MOTION: Ms. Haskell moved to go into executive session at 7:50 p.m. to discuss the investigative report with the superintendent.

SECOND: Ms. Lemieux

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

MOTION: Ms. Lemieux moved to come out of executive session at 8:09 p.m.

SECOND: Ms. Haskell

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

5. Request for reimbursement from previous board member: Attorney Littlefield reviewed the correspondence that was received from Ms. Klonoski with the Board. She said that with respect to the first request to amend the minutes of the August 8, 2012 meeting, she said that the

minutes accurately reflect what was said at the meeting and should remain as is.

Her request to rescind the vote of September 12, 2012 should be denied. The Ethics Commission ruled that she was not acting within her role as a board member.

Her third request is to have Mr. Smith read his letter of January 27, 2012 into the minutes. Attorney Littlefield said that this is not necessary.

She said that it is also not necessary to rescind the vote of April 14, 2010 regarding her right to be an advocate in the schools.

She concluded by informing the board that they are not responsible for paying her attorney his fee for services rendered to her.

Attorney Littlefield said that she will send a letter to Ms. Klonoski stating that the Board will take no further action on this matter.

MOTION: Ms. Haskell moved to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

SECOND: Ms. Lemieux

VOTE: Passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy St. Amour
Recording Secretary