

SUDBURY SELECT BOARD

MONDAY MARCH 17, 2025

7:00 PM

JOINT MEETING WITH SUDBURY PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Meeting can be viewed at www.sudburytv.org)

ZOOM Meeting

Present: Chair Jennifer Roberts, Vice-Chair Daniel Carty, Select Board Member Lisa Kouchakdjian, Select Board Member Janie Dretler, Select Board Member Charles Russo

Present: Sudbury Public School Committee Members – Nicole Burnard, Chair; Meredith Gerson, Mandy Sim, Karyn Jones, SPS Superintendent Brad Crozier, SPS Business Manager Don Sawyer, Assistant Superintendent Annette Doyle

The statutory requirements as to notice having been compiled with, the meeting was convened at 7:16 PM, via Zoom telecommunication mode.

Chair Roberts announced the recording of the meeting and other procedural aspects included in the meeting.

Vote to open joint meeting with Sudbury Public School committee and interview candidates for the purpose of making an appointment to fill an unexpired term on the School Committee

Chair Roberts read in the words of the motion to open the joint meeting with the Sudbury Public School Committee. Vice-Chair Carty moved in the words of the Chair. Board Member Dretler seconded the motion.

It was on motion 5-0; Kouchakdjian-present, Dretler-present, Russo-present, Carty-present, Roberts-present

VOTED: To open the joint meeting with the Sudbury Public School Committee

Public Comments

Resident Manish Sharma, 77 Colonial Road, spoke of SPS student food program and mentioned that such accounting be considered by Mr. Sawyer.

Opening Remarks by Chair

- Acknowledged that Town Manager Sheehan was not present due to a concurrent meeting with the Finance Committee
- Reported the purpose of tonight's joint meeting was to appoint a temporary School Committee Member

SPS Committee Chair Burnard stated that the order of candidate interviews was selected by a randomizer and each candidate would receive four related questions. She added that after the four interviews, a new SPS Committee member would be appointed this evening.

Interview questions, as outlined:

1. Why are you interested in the role of the School Committee?
2. Tell us a little bit more about your experience and how that will support the work of the School Committee?
3. Please share your understanding on the role of the School Committee?
4. What do you hope to accomplish in this role?

Candidates - Richard Tinsley, Jessica McCready, Elizabeth Sues, Allison S. Vanderels, and Kathleen Bell

Jessica McCready

Question #1. Ms. Jones asked first question. Ms. McCready stated that she preferred to start the appointment as a temporary member first. She emphasized her passion for education. She confirmed she had been watching the SPS Committee meetings and was looking forward to being a member.

Question #2. Ms. Sim asked about Ms. McCready's related background and training in pedagogy. Ms. McCready detailed her efforts with student engagement when she taught college level biology for 14 years, served as chair of the Math and Computer Science Departments, and worked with the Department of Health and Human Services. She mentioned that her curriculum has been used at LSRHS.

Question #3. Chair Roberts asked about the understood role of the School Committee. Ms. McCready outlined the role involved in approving district school budgets, extending the Superintendent Contract and to listen to all in the community

Question #4. Mr. Carty asked what proposed accomplishments might include. Ms. McCready responded that within the next six weeks, she would work with current School Committee Members and the community, and would re-establish subcommittees, such as the LBQ Subcommittee and the group focused on learning impacts from COVID. Ms. McCready stressed she would strive to improve communications with all members and be more accessible to members of the community.

Elizabeth Sues

Question #1. Ms. Gerson led the line of questioning. Ms. Sues detailed that as a parent of two young girls entering the Sudbury schools, she wanted to help improve the SPS School Committee functioning; she indicated that her experience is most relevant when considering the mission of the SPS School Committee. She stressed continued improvement and working in collaborative way with SPS.

Question #2. Ms. Burnard asked about related experience. Ms. Sues explained she has served as the Director of Policy Procedure and Governance as a CPA (for some 20 years). She noted that her mother was a kindergarten teacher and that she understands the teacher role and the related importance associated with financial aspects.

Question #3. Chair Roberts asked about the understood role of the School Committee. Ms. Sues responded that her goal was to act in the best interest of Sudbury students, and assist with related business and finance aspects.

Question #4. Mr. Carty asked what proposed accomplishments might include. Ms. Sues responded that she would be proud to work on the SPS Committee and help advance student gender communities' presence, advocate for Superintendent goals in a timely and relevant manner.

Allison S. Vanderels

Question #1. Ms. Sim asked why the applicant was interested in the role. Ms. Vanderels confirmed she came from a military background and her daughter was a 7th grade SPS student. She detailed her involvement with Haynes School, and was elected as a member of the School Improvement Counsel and later became Chair of the Counsel, which reflects a collaboration with parents, teachers and the community.

Question #2. Ms. Jones inquired about related experience. Ms. Vanderels responded that she excels in researching and gathering information, and was very active with employment risk analysis concerns/reports and worked with legislators in DC. She added that objectivity involving contracting and hiring, reflect a considerable part of her professional accomplishments.

Question #3. Chair Roberts asked about the understood role of the School Committee. Ms. Vanderels outlined involvement with: 1. Educational goals and policies – indicating the benefits of reviewing existing policies and measuring new initiatives. 2. Reviewing/studying and approving school budgets, which must include robust questioning and long-term planning. 3. Helping to advance School Superintendent goals and measuring and modifying such goals when appropriate. 4. Communicating with the residents of Sudbury.

Question #4. Mr. Carty asked what proposed accomplishments might include. Ms. Vanderels replied that commencing the role now would be beneficial; she mentioned several items in consideration at this time. She stressed the importance of consideration of the Superintendent Contract and the consideration of various liaison positions.

Kathleen Bell

Question #1. Ms. Gerson asked Ms. Bell why she was interested in the appointment. Ms. Bell responded that she had been following the SPS Committee for years and a short-term SPS Committee appointment would be perfect. She noted that her years of public service in Town would be beneficial to the Committee.

Question #2. Ms. Sim inquired about related experience. Ms. Bell detailed that she had trained teachers in the areas of tech and curriculum management, she held positions of leadership in the education area, and worked with many groups in the community.

Question #3. Chair Roberts asked about the understood role of the School Committee. Ms. Bell stated that the position would help advance educational goals and policies, determine school budgets, maintain responsibility for hiring and the related negotiation of school contracts, especially in consideration of the upcoming Superintendent Contract. She stressed the values of the community, and emphasized that “we will respect Board members at all times, even in times of disagreement.”

Question #4. Mr. Carty asked what proposed accomplishments might include. Ms. Bell stated that her hope would be to fill an essential gap and help modify the current climate of the SPS Committee, keeping SPS Committee on track.

Richard Tinsley

Mr. Tinsley joined the meeting at 8:00 PM. He apologized for his confusion with the start time, and indicated that he understood he would be interviewed at 8:00 PM.

Mr. Tinsley apologized for his mistake with time.

Question #1. Ms. Burnard asked Mr. Tinsley why he was interested in filling the SPS Committee member role. Mr. Tinsley stated that he was a Committee Member for three years and education was a very important factor in his life. He indicated that he would be a good fit for the temporary position and would be an asset to the Committee during this time of transition.

Question #2. Ms. Gerson inquired about related experience. Mr. Tinsley responded that he was a significant contributor during his three years on the Committee.

Question #3. Chair Roberts asked about the understood role of the School Committee. Mr. Tinsley responded that the main function of the role was to help make Sudbury one of the best school systems in the State.

Question #4. Mr. Carty asked what proposed accomplishments might include. Mr. Tinsley responded that the primary accomplishment would reflect the opportunity to fill the position with an experienced person to serve the Sudbury School System.

Chair Roberts recommended that the group conduct a straw poll at this time. Ms. Burnard agreed.

Ms. Sim thanked everyone who submitted an application. She noted that it would be great to have a 5th voice on the Committee again. She mentioned that because Ms. McCready was running uncontested, she would vote for Ms. McCready.

Ms. Gerson mentioned it might be beneficial to have additional time to consider the permanent appointment, and that Mr. Tinsley would be the best candidate to fill the temporary role.

Ms. Jones indicated that Ms. McCready might be the best fit and five people on the Committee was an important consideration.

Mr. Russo agreed with Ms. Sim and wished the meeting could have been conducted in February, and stated that Ms. McCready would likely be the best choice.

Ms. Kouchakdjian supported the appointment of Ms. McCready, who understands what the issues are.

Mr. Carty stated that Mr. Tinsley would be a good fit in consideration of his experience and the fact that he is removed from any election influences.

Ms. Burnard noted that Ms. McCready was uncontested, but Mr. Tinsley brings experience to the role and would “hit the ground running.” She indicated that both candidates would excel.

Ms. Dretler noted that Ms. McCready would be the best choice for Sudbury at this time and a five-member Committee was essential.

Chair Roberts stated she supported the appointment of Ms. McCready.

Ms. Dretler motioned to appoint Jessica McCready to fill an expired term on the Sudbury Public School Committee. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

It was on motion 8-1; Russo-aye, Dretler-aye, Kouchakdjian-aye, Carty-aye, Roberts-aye, Gerson-no, Sim-aye, Jones-aye, Burnard-aye

VOTED: To appoint Jessica McCready to fill an expired term on the Sudbury Public School Committee

Vote to close joint meeting with Sudbury Public School Committee

Mr. Carty motioned to adjourn the joint meeting with Sudbury Public School Committee and close the Select Board meeting. Ms. Kouchakdjian seconded the motion.

It was on motion 5-0; Kouchakdjian-aye, Dretler-aye, Carty-aye, Russo-aye, Roberts-aye

VOTED: To adjourn the joint meeting with Sudbury Public School Committee

The Select Board adjourned the joint meeting with the Sudbury Public School Committee at 8:17 PM.