

**EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL MEETING - DECEMBER 2, 2014  
(DIRECTLY FOLLOWING THE REORGANIZATION MEETING)**

**Carl T. Secor Administration Center – Board Room**

**Minutes**

- I. Board President, William Searfoss, called the meeting to order at 5:48 p.m. and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. Board Secretary, Patricia Rosado, called the roll. Members present were: Ronald Bradley, Robert Cooke, Eileen Featherman, Robert Gress, Roy Horton, Marjorie James, William Searfoss, and Gary Summers. Also present was: Christopher Brown, Solicitor.

School Personnel Present: Jeffrey Bader, Anthony Calderone, Gail Kulick, Sharon Laverdure, Thomas Lesniewski, Fred Mill and Patricia Rosado.

Community member presents: Robert C. Huffman and John Smith.

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by Roy Horton to approve this agenda for December 2, 2014, (page 1), as submitted. Motion was seconded by Eileen Featherman and carried unanimously, 8-0.

**IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE BOARD**

None

**V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION -- LIMITED TO AGENDA ITEMS**

None

**VI. FISCAL ITEM**

**A. Alarm Monitoring Services**

**ACTION BY THE BOARD:**

Motion was made by Ronald Bradley to accept the November 18, 2014 proposal of Royal Security Services, Inc. for the provision of alarm monitoring services at a cost of \$2,871 per year for a three (3) year term from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2017, subject to the option of the District to renew for up to two (2) one (1) year extensions at the same annual cost. The proposal is being accepted pursuant and under and subject to the District's RFP-ALARM MONITORING SERVICES PROPOSAL # ESASD – AM14-15 and the terms and conditions thereof. Motion was seconded by Roy Horton and carried unanimously, 8-0.

(See pages 2-5)

**VII. DISCUSSION OF THE APPOINTMENT OF A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER TO FILL A VACANCY ON THE BOARD FOR A TERM ENDING DECEMBER 2015**

- A. Mr. William Searfoss said that the Board has a packet with five letters of intent from community members who would like to be considered as the replacement to the vacant Board position. One applicant submitted it late and it's up to the Board members to decide if they would like to consider his application.

Mr. Roy Horton made a motion to accept the late submission and Mrs. Marjorie James seconded. Mr. Robert Gress was not in agreement because a deadline was set and the Board should adhere to it. No one else opposed the acceptance of the late submission.

Mr. Gress recommended that the Board members speak to the individuals that are present tonight and make the decision.

Mr. Chris Brown said that the only problem with this is that at the November 17<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, Mr. Searfoss announced that at the December 2<sup>nd</sup> Special meeting, the vacancy would be discussed and the Board would appoint a replacement at the December 15<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

Mr. Horton questioned how can a discussion take place without a motion. Mr. Brown said that it can because it was advertised as follows: ... "for discussion of the appointment of a School Board member to fill a vacancy on the Board for a term ending December 2015".

Mr. Gary Summers said he believes the procedure is that someone is recommended and a vote is taken. If that person is not appointed then another motion can take place to consider another person. Mr. Brown said that this was the impression he had. Mr. Summers said that all Board members need time to review all the candidates. He asked if he is able to discuss the candidates with other Board members on the phone. Mr. Brown said as long as there is no quorum present.

Mr. Searfoss said that he hoped to discuss the candidates as a whole Board in public since we are compressed for time. Mr. Ronald Bradley said he does not agree with the quick turnaround in obtaining the candidates' information. He does not see all five candidates present; therefore, it is not fair to make a decision tonight. Mr. Searfoss said everyone had the opportunity to come. Mr. Robert Cooke said it was their choice not to attend. Mrs. Sharon Laverdure said that everyone was invited to the meeting by the Board secretary. Mr. Gress said that he received calls from interested individuals asking if it is a paying position. He advised them that it is not and they would have to commit to attend all the meetings for one year.

Mrs. Laverdure said she also took phone calls from interested individuals and even one resident from Stroudsburg showed interest. She advised him that they need to live in the East Stroudsburg Area School District.

Mrs. James said that takes a while to learn all the procedures. Mr. Robert Huffman has done this job before and knows what it is to be a School Board member.

Mrs. Eileen Featherman said that Mr. Huffman served on the committees for instance; the Monroe Career & Technical Institute JOC committee. She is in favor of him as a candidate.

Mr. Cooke said he also endorses Mr. Huffman because he has no obligations where it would be a conflict for him to start immediately.

Mr. Horton said that Mr. Huffman has helped us before and has gone through the whole process. He recommends that if this is something the candidates are serious about they should run for the School Board vacancies during next year's election.

Mr. Bradley said that we need to give each candidate the opportunity to present their history to the entire Board. We should not be speaking about specific individuals. Mr. Horton said this is why they are here tonight to express their opinions and express their recommendations. Mr. Bradley said they should look at all of the candidates' qualifications.

Mr. Searfoss said that the Board members make decisions that are based on millions of dollars and we need people who come to the meetings. Tonight we have two candidates, who are present, and he would like to give them the opportunity to speak.

1. Mr. John Smith said that he is a Vietnam Vet and has been a resident since 2005 and is interested in what is going on in his township. He feels that being a Board member is a perfect fit for a retired teacher, as himself, from New Jersey. He said he has experience as a businessman, where he dealt with audits and financial management. He worked in the field of education as a teacher and was involved with different programs that made changes in the curriculum. These programs helped the failing students to pass.

Mr. Horton thanked Mr. Smith for serving in the military. He asked how often has Mr. Smith come to Board meetings. Mr. Smith said that he has attended about five Board meetings.

Mr. Bradley asked Mr. Smith how would he help with the reorganization of education to bring the students up to par. Mr. Smith said he would assist with his experience in helping the students maintain control of what is mandated. Mr. Bradley said that we have a large ratio of minority in our school district; therefore, how would Mr. Smith assist in this area. Mr. Smith said since not every child is the same and they all learn differently, he would suggest that they be taught with compassion and understanding in order for them to be successful.

Mr. Summers asked if there was a dress code implemented at his previous school. Mr. Smith said that it was and the children's attitude as well as the atmosphere of the school was changed.

2. Mr. Robert Huffman said that he was a Board Member for 16 years since 1989. He has been on the Board again in 2007 and 2011 to fill the vacancy of Board members who have resigned. He was Vice President of the Board for one year. He also served on the Monroe Career & Technical Institute (MCTI), formally known as the Vo-Tech, Joint Operating Committee. He was the Board Secretary for about nine years. He is also willing to step in again and is ready to serve again since he has the experience to do so.

Mr. Searfoss asked Mr. Huffman if he is planning to run for School Board member again. Mr. Huffman said that he is not planning to run.

Mr. Horton asked Mr. Huffman and Mr. Smith if they are willing to serve on the Board and outside committees. Mr. Huffman said he is, since he was once part of the MCTI and IU 20 committees. Mr. Smith said he has no problem joining committees since he is retired and is willing to do whatever is necessary.

Mr. Bradley asked Mr. Huffman what are his current responsibilities. Mr. Huffman said he is the school district's Treasurer.

Mr. Bradley asked Mr. Huffman how does he feel about the growth in the district and having about 50% of minority students. Mr. Huffman said he is here to help all students get an education.

Mr. Horton asked if Mr. Huffman gets elected, would the district need a new treasurer. Mr. Jeff Bader said we would.

Mr. Summers clarified that what will need to happen is that we would need a motion at the Regular School Board meeting to appoint someone and it would need to be seconded and then the voting will take place. He said with the two candidates that are present, one has experience on the Board; therefore, knows the whole process, procedures and is knowledgeable of what is going on. On the other hand, the other individual is able to offer different views and approaches when making decisions.

Mr. Horton suggested that the other candidates that could not make it here tonight be invited to the Regular School Board meeting to speak. Mr. Searfoss said they can speak during public participation as residents and will get three minutes to share their credentials. Mr. Huffman said that it was his understanding that the decision would be made tonight and that person would be sworn in at the next Board meeting in order to begin their term in December 2014.

Mr. Brown said that it was advertised as discussion of the appointment of a School Board member; therefore; the appointment will take place at the December Regular School Board meeting. The individual will then take the Board seat in January, 2015.

Mr. Gress said that he appreciates that Mr. Smith and Mr. Huffman made it here tonight. He personally prefers someone who is experienced; therefore, he does not have to be training someone new on the Board. He does not mind assisting but having history with the Board is important. There are so many issues that need to be decided and having experience will make it easier to understand. He suggested that all other candidates run for School Board member in next year's election.

Mr. Searfoss said that this is the best time to discuss the vacancy in a public forum. He should have said to vote on it to but he wanted to make sure every Board member got a chance to give their opinions and have their questions answered.

Mr. Brown said that another option would be to go ahead and vote tonight.

Mr. Summers said there is no way they can vote and appoint a new Board member tonight because it is supposed to be for discussion only. The voting can then take place at the December 15<sup>th</sup> Regular School Board meeting. He said he

disagrees with not voting in individuals who have less experience because they can bring new ideas and be just as effective.

Mr. Bradley said he takes umbrage that people from this area resent the people that moved in and build their large homes because they helped to develop this area. The high tax situation is the Board's fault.

Mr. Searfoss recommended that everyone keep all conversation professional.

Mrs. Featherman said that she takes umbrage that people that moved into this area feel that the local citizens do not know anything and that kids are not learning because it is not true.

Mr. Bradley said it may not be true but we hired an Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction to help with failing students.

Mr. Horton said that he agrees with Mr. Summers and Mr. Bradley that we cannot make a decision tonight because there are gray areas that need to be discussed. He believes that we cannot make up our minds until the next time we meet.

Mr. Searfoss said that his idea was that the person would be ready to begin work at the next meeting.

Mrs. Laverdure said that she will invite all candidates to the next School Board meeting.

Mr. Searfoss said that they can speak during public participation.

Mr. Horton said they should be informed that they have 3 minutes to speak.

Mrs. Laverdure said she will reach out to them to attend and inform them that they have three minutes to speak.

Mr. Smith asked if he will need to speak again. Mr. Searfoss said he does not have to but may want to. He said Mr. Huffman and Mr. Smith may have an advantage in speaking again by having more time to discuss their qualifications and answer any questions.

Mr. Gress said that the Legislative Commission on Funding will be held in the Board Room on December 4, 2014. He said he cannot attend because they keep changing the time of the presentations.

Mr. Searfoss said he would like to see the Lego Presentation.

Mr. Summers said that if we calculate all money to actual amounts from last year, we get about \$400,000 less than we got five years ago.

Mrs. James suggested that Mr. Gress prepare the Legos and label each district for everyone to see.

Mr. Horton asked if the person who works at ESU would have to abstain from voting on motions that pertain to ESU. Mr. Brown said this would not be a violation. Mr. Bader said it would not be a problem unless they are directly profiting from the transaction.

Mr. Bradley suggested contacting all the candidates to invite them to the next meeting. He personally feels that this whole matter has been rushed.

Mr. Searfoss said if someone wants to serve on the Board, they should be attending meetings. There is a certain timeframe to get a replacement and whoever is sitting on the Board should know all procedures.

Mrs. Laverdure said the whole matter was not rushed because there are State laws that require the Board to fill a vacant seat within 30 days.

Mr. Searfoss said that the candidates will have three minutes to speak and the person chosen will then get sworn in at the next meeting.

Mr. Brown said that the individual can be appointed and then sworn in on the same night.

Mr. Horton asked if a Judge would need to be present. Mr. Brown said yes and the agenda can be stopped at that time to have the individual sworn in.

Mr. Summers suggested having this item be first on the agenda for them to sit at the seat directly after public participation.

**Committee Discussion**

Mrs. Laverdure suggested that all Board Committees set their next committee meeting dates tonight.

Mr. Cooke said that the Property/Facilities Committee would not meet in December.

Mr. Gress said that he discussed it with Mr. Bader and decided that they were fine for the Finance Committee not to meet.

Mrs. James said that the Policy Review Committee does not have to meet as long as the policies that went for first reading in November can go for final approval at the December meeting.

**VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS/INFORMATION**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT 6:54 P.M.**

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia L. Rosado,  
Board Secretary