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ACTION

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND SELECTMEN'S MEETING

MAY 28, 1998

The School Committee and the Board of Selectmen held a special meeting on Wednesday, May 28 1998 at 7:30 P.M. Present were Chairman Wayne Friedrichs, Lees Stuntz, Pam Harting- Barrat, Mike Scanlon, Mike Coppolino, Jesse Liberty, Herman Kabakoff, Dore' Hunter, Peter Ashton, Town Manager Don Johnson and Assistant Town Manager John Murray.

{The meeting was televised by cable}.

The two Boards are gathered tonight to interview two candidates to fill the School Committee vacancy created by Phil Zeilkow's resignation. The two candidates are Sidney Johnston and Mary Ann Ashton. The procedure will be to interview the applicants, discuss the applicants and take a roll call vote.

Peter Ashton, made a brief statement regarding the possibility of the appointment of his wife, Mary Ann. Mr. Ashton stated that he has been informed by Ms. Carol O'Haire, State Ethics Commission that there is no potential conflict of interest problems if Mary Ann were to be elected to the School Committee. Concerns were raised regarding Mr. Ashton's ability to vote on School Budget, debt exclusion or operating overrides, and/or other issues. Ms. O'Haire indicated that there is no conflict. Ms. O'Haire also indicated that Mr. Ashton was not automatically precluded from participating in the process of selecting a school committee candidate, however, Mr. Ashton chose to abstain from the voting and the discussion.

Mr. Sidney Johnston, 51 Quabog Road, expressed his desire to fill the vacancy on the School Committee. The School Committee stated that they were quite impressed with Mr. Johnston's resume. Mr. Johnston listed his credentials and stated that he feels the current issues the School Committee face are school crowding, building maintenance, and sewer disposal. Mr. Johnston also stated that these issues need to be solved. Mr. Johnston indicated that due to the projected increase in classroom size a solution would be to move some school functions to rental space. School Committee members questioned Mr. Johnston regarding what his contact was with the school system, views of Special Education, and what policies Mr. Johnston thought the school committee face. Mr. Liberty expressed concern with Mr. Johnston's ability move toward a consensus as a group. Dore' asked Mr. Johnston if he was to be appointed would he seek election in 1999. Mr. Johnston stated yes. Dore' also asked what Mr. Johnston's position was on the override for the school building project. Mr. Johnston stated that he voted for the project in order to keep the class sizes down.

Mary Ann Ashton, 1 Old Barn Way, is seeking to fill the vacancy of the school committee. Ms. Ashton stated that she wears many hats, including, wife, mother, daughter, business women, VP in an economic consulting firm, volunteer in schools, PTO fund-raiser, Co-Chair of the PTO, and actively worked to support the override passage, attends public meetings and votes regularly in town elections. Ms. Ashton stressed that she is optimistic. Ms. Ashton

stated that there will be an enrollment surge, which will result in crowded classrooms. Ms. Ashton stated that we have many creative teachers in our school system and she would like to the teachers to be able to utilize their creativity without worrying about classroom over crowding. Ms. Ashton stated that she would like to add her voice to the school committee. School Committee members asked Ms. Ashton what is the function of the school committee, what her contribution to the school committee would be, and what she would improve or keep the same. Ms. Ashton stated that her views on the function of the School Committee are that they are primarily a policy making Board and stated that she would like to see the lines of communication more open to the citizens of Acton. Ms. Ashton also stated that she is a supporter of the School Building Project. Ms. Ashton also spoke about the importance of a new teacher contract.

The School Committee and the Board of Selectmen stated their opinions regarding the applicants. DORE' HUNTER - Move to appoint Mary Ann Ashton to fill the vacancy left by Phil Zeilkow on the School Committee. MIKE COPPOLINO - Second. Roll Call Taken:

Dore Hunter - yes

Wayne Friedrichs - yes

Herman Kabakoff - no

Pam Harting Barrat - yes

Lees Stuntz - yes

Mike Coppolino - yes

Mike Scanlon - yes.

Motion passes.

HERMAN KABAKOFF - Move to adjourn the meeting. DORE' HUNTER - Second. UNANIMOUS VOTE.

Nancy E. Tavolino

Clerk

7/21/98

Date

Sheryl Ball

Sheryl Ball
Recording Secretary
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