

Tawas Area Schools
Special Board of Education Meeting
August 6, 2024

The special meeting of the Tawas Area Board of Education was called to order by President Bruning at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, August 6, 2024 in the boardroom at the administration office.

Mrs. Bruning led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call:

Present: Klenow, Edmonds, Ulman, Lentz, Jenkins, Bruning
Absent: None
Tardy: Butzin

Administrators Present: Livingston

Mr. Butzin entered the meeting at 5:17 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

Mrs. Bruning stated that the Board would now begin the public comment portion of the meeting. She explained that individuals would have 3 minutes to speak and she would be setting a timer to ensure this time limit is not exceeded.

Gypsy Pawlaczyk was the first to speak. Ms. Pawlaczyk talked about her daughter being bullied at school. She said she emailed multiple people at school, including Mrs. Danek, and never got a response from her. In another situation, she stated that there was no follow up from Mrs. Danek when an issue was presented to her. She concluded by sharing that there is no follow through from Mrs. Danek and her special education knowledge and skills are lacking.

Christina Ott was the next person on public comment sign-in sheet. She said that she had written a letter to the Board and was comfortable with that and did not wish to share anything further.

Shane Redfield spoke next regarding issues that they had with their daughter. He stated that his daughter was bullied and Mrs. Danek did not do anything about it. Mr. Redfield said that Mrs. Danek is not capable of the Superintendent position and that she does not deserve it.

Roberta Miller addressed the board next. She talked about being a Tawas alumni and stated that things were so much different when she was a special education student in school. Mrs. Miller said that her son had just finished 7th grade and at the beginning of the year she had requested an IEP or a 504 plan for him, but after having a meeting with staff was denied both of these accommodations. She said she was fine with that but still wanted help with her son's social/emotional needs and did not receive that. She said there is no support for children with special needs.

Lastly, Shawn Flynn shared that his son was targeted at school and does not feel that Mrs. Danek is fit to be Superintendent based on his experiences with her.

NEW BUSINESS

At 5:24 p.m. the Board transitioned into New Business. Dr. Debra Fountain was the first to be interviewed. Dr. Fountain appeared virtually and expressed her gratitude for the Board allowing

her to do so. She explained that she had every intention of attending the interview in person but Hurricane Debbie made air travel a nightmare and her flights were cancelled. The Board went through a series of questions with Dr. Fountain focusing on budgeting, teacher retention and attraction, delegation and discipline. She shared many experiences and talked about how she would handle different situations that may arise. Mrs. Fountain thanked the Board again before concluding her interview.

Motion by Ulman, support by Butzin for a brief recess at 6:16 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Sarah Danek was brought into the meeting at 6:29 p.m. to conduct her second round interview. The board asked Mrs. Danek the same questions asked of Dr. Fountain regarding budgeting, teacher retention and attraction, delegation and discipline. She also shared her experiences and vision for these areas. Mrs. Danek concluded her interview by thanking the Board and sharing her passion for this position.

Motion by Ulman, support by Butzin for a 5-minute recess at 7:22 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Butzin, with support by Ulman to hire Sarah Danek as the Superintendent of Tawas Area Schools. The Board then engaged in some discussion about the candidates. They shared their concerns regarding each of the candidates and spent some time reviewing their answers to the questions. The Board had some concerns about Dr. Fountain being familiar with Michigan law and policy, her lack of experience with discipline and her inability to answer the questions in the interview, feeling like she told a lot of storied and shared experiences but failed to answer numerous questions. They stated that she would be a great face in the community but does not really know the community and its issues and needs. They talked about Mrs. Danek and there was some concern regarding her ability to focus on the smaller steps and not just see the big picture and miss steps along the way. The Board appreciated that Mrs. Danek knows the community and is familiar with the people.

A roll call vote was taken. Yes: Edmonds, Ulman, Lentz, Butzin. No: Klenow, Jenkins, Bruning. Motion carries.

Motion by Butzin, support by Edmonds for a brief recess at 7:48 p.m. Motion carried unanimously

Mrs. Danek was then called back into the meeting and offered the Superintendent position. She accepted.

A personnel committee meeting was scheduled for Monday, August 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. to discuss Mrs. Danek's contract.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Ulman, support by Lentz to adjourn the meeting at 7:54 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.