

**MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 9, 2021
SPECIAL MEETING OF THE
WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

November 9, 2021

1. Opening Items

1.01 CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Board of Trustees was called to order at 8:09 a.m. in the Board Room of the Central Administration Building, located at 425 East Ninth Street in Reno, Nevada.

1.02 ROLL CALL

President Angela Taylor and Board Members Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, and Beth Smith were present. Superintendent Kristen McNeill and staff were also present.

1.03 PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Trustee Jeff Church led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Items for Presentation, Discussion, Information and/or Action

2.01 INTERVIEWS BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES (BOARD) OF THE FOLLOWING LEGALLY-QUALIFIED APPLICANTS TO FILL THE VACANCY ON THE BOARD IN DISTRICT F WHO WERE SELECTED FOR SUCH INTERVIEWS AT THE OCTOBER 26, 2021 SPECIAL MEETING: ELVIRA DIAZ, DR. JOHN GWALTNEY, JACK HEINEMANN, AND ADAM MAYBERRY; DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO APPOINT ONE OF THE INTERVIEWED APPLICANTS TO FILL THE VACANCY

President Taylor reviewed the process the Board would follow for the interviews and selection of one of the applicants to fill the vacant seat in Trustee District F. Each candidate would be provided 30 minutes for an opening statement, questions from the Trustees, and a closing statement. She disclosed that she knew Ms. Diaz and Mr. Heinemann, but did not have close, personal relationships with them.

Trustee Nicolet disclosed that she had worked closely with Dr. Gwaltney when he was president of Truckee Meadows Community College and she was the director of the Early Childhood Center.

Dr. John Gwaltney withdrew his name from consideration for personal reasons. He thanked the Board for selecting him as a finalist and for their work for the children in Washoe County. He urged the Board to continue to find ways to work together and strengthen their relationships with the community.

Elvira Diaz waived the opportunity to provide an opening statement to allow additional time for the questions from Trustees.

Trustee Rodriguez asked how Ms. Diaz worked to resolve conflicts with others. Ms. Diaz remarked that it was important to listen to what the other person was saying and try to understand where they were coming from. It was important for someone who was upset to take an opportunity to calm down before trying to resolve problems.

Trustee Minetto commented that working together was an important part of being on the Board of Trustees and often included compromises. She wondered how Ms. Diaz defined compromise. Ms. Diaz stated she saw compromise as a way to work together to do what was best for the students and community.

Trustee Nicolet asked what Ms. Diaz hoped to accomplish on the Board of Trustees and why. Ms. Diaz commented that she would want to help create a clearer picture for students of the importance of their education and getting a good job after graduation. She believed it was important to clearly show how their grades would prepare them for college or careers because there were many times when the students did not have a clear picture of what would happen after high school.

Trustee Smith wondered what unique voice, experience, or perspective Ms. Diaz would bring to the Board and how that would impact the quality of the decisions the Board made. Ms. Diaz responded, in Spanish, that she would provide a connection between the Board and the Latinx community and students. She was also the parent of a transgender student and understood the challenges principals and teachers were facing in terms of the needs of LGBTQ+ students. As a former chemist, she would also be able to work with young women and encourage them to look at the impact they could have in the sciences.

Trustee Church inquired as to what was one thing Ms. Diaz would change in the District. Ms. Diaz explained she would like to improve education so Nevada ranked number one in education in the nation. She believed that would only occur if the District focused on providing an individualized education for each student so they were able to be educated in the most appropriate way they learned.

President Taylor asked, specifically, what were the most important leadership skills needed to be a successful Board member. Ms. Diaz felt it was important to have an

open mind, know the rules, and try to understand where those who disagreed with you were coming from. She stated it was critical for the Trustees to be an example for the students and act appropriately, as well as admitting when they were wrong and tell the truth.

President Taylor opened the floor to follow-up questions.

Trustee Church noted Ms. Diaz was affiliated with various political advocacy groups. He wondered how she would balance the advocacy work with listening to all sides as a Trustee. Ms. Diaz remarked the work of a Trustee was different than her advocacy work. She did not see the job of a Trustee as political in nature but one that would bring people together.

Trustee Smith asked if Ms. Diaz would be open to other perspectives while making decisions as a member of the Board. Ms. Diaz mentioned that she had previously ran and lost an election for the Sparks City Council; however, she continued to work and meet with the candidate who won because it was important to the community that everyone worked together for the best possible outcome.

Ms. Diaz provided a closing statement for the Board. She spoke about the importance of communicating with others, especially those who disagreed with you, to understand each other and build relationships. She believed she was the best applicant to provide a bridge with the Latinx community. She was interested in working for the students to ensure they received the best education possible so they could be successful in the future.

Adam Mayberry provided a brief opening statement and spoke about his knowledge of Washoe County since he was raised in the area, including the various communities that encompassed the large geographical area District F represented.

Trustee Rodriguez asked how Mr. Mayberry worked to resolve conflicts with others. Mr. Mayberry mentioned he was a team player and generally got along well with others. If there was a conflict, he was always interested in sitting down with the individual to try to work through any issues. If problems persisted, he felt it was critical both parties understand what had to occur to ensure the work was able to be accomplished for the ultimate betterment of the organization.

Trustee Minetto commented that working together was an important part of being on the Board of Trustees and often included compromises. She wondered how Mr. Mayberry defined compromise. Mr. Mayberry explained that compromise, for him, was meeting in the middle. It was often said the best compromise was when no one was happy. He believed one of the current challenges occurring in government was there

was little interest in compromising on anything. He prided himself on his willingness to build relationships and work with others to reach a goal that was satisfying to all.

Trustee Nicolet asked what Mr. Mayberry hoped to accomplish on the Board of Trustees and why. Mr. Mayberry noted the tenure of the position was for 14 months and the Board would be selecting a new superintendent during that time. He felt it was critical to focus on ensuring a smooth transition for a new superintendent. He hoped to be one of seven voices that provided a sense of reason and unity that would rebuild credibility and trust for the Board with the community. He would be interested in raising awareness for students with special needs.

Trustee Smith wondered what unique voice, experience, or perspective Mr. Mayberry would bring to the Board and how that would impact the quality of the decisions the Board made. Mr. Mayberry remarked he had been in public service for close to 30 years and believed he had a very good understanding of what the “big picture” tended to be. He was interested in providing good direction to the Superintendent and staff so they could inform the Board on their best options to move the District forward. His most important job was that of being a dad and wanted to ensure the children and parents understood they were safe in the schools, no matter what.

Trustee Church inquired as to what was one thing Mr. Mayberry would change in the District. Mr. Mayberry commented that it was important to get the parents back on the side of the schools and school districts. He did not believe what was occurring across the country in terms of threats was happening in Washoe County, but the challenges others were facing were bleeding into the community, so the Board needed to work to build back the trust with parents. He also felt the way education was funded in Nevada was challenging and it would be important to work with the Governor and Legislators to increase the amount of money available to schools, so the funding was on-track with inflation and cost of living increases. He was frustrated more money was spent on prisons in the United States than on schools.

Trustee Church requested additional information on Mr. Mayberry’s service on the Reno Tahoe Airport Authority Board. Mr. Mayberry stated he had served on the Airport Authority Board for 7 years. He indicated he had also served on the Secret Witness Board, Sparks Citizens’ Advisory Board, and on various non-profit boards over the years.

President Taylor asked, specifically, what were the most important leadership skills needed to be a successful Board member. Mr. Mayberry believed the best way to describe serving on the Board of Trustees was “servant-leadership” since the Trustees were working to provide the best outcomes for 62,000 students and their families. He indicated listening was critical; providing informed oversight of the Superintendent, to include a level of autonomy; responsiveness and accessibility to constituents; and empathy, including a sense of kindness and love to the community.

President Taylor opened the floor to follow-up questions.

President Taylor asked how or if Mr. Mayberry's hearing impairment would add a unique voice to the Board. Mr. Mayberry explained he had a cochlear implant since 2014 and it had really changed his life. He was struck with meningitis in the early 1970s, which left him with a hearing impairment and could not speak for a number of years. He spoke of the advocacy his mother provided for him to ensure he was in general education classrooms because the school district at the time wanted to place him in a school for the deaf. He believed that his experiences provided him with a unique perspective because he understood the challenges faced by those who had difficulty with language.

Mr. Mayberry provided a closing statement to the Board on why he believed he was the best candidate for the vacancy. He spoke of his experience and commitment to the country, state, and county. While the "3 Rs" in education were important, the children needed more than that during current times to ensure they were not left behind and that they knew they were safe and cared for.

Jack Heinemann provided a brief opening statement to the Board. He highlighted he tried to live by a quote by Gandhi to "Be the change you want to see in the world."

Trustee Rodriguez asked how Mr. Heinemann worked to resolve conflicts with others. Mr. Heinemann indicated it was important to start with the same set of facts and information. He believed conflict was easy when people did not have all the information, so it was critical to start with the facts. Resolution would only happen if people were able to sit down and have conversations with each other.

Trustee Minetto commented that working together was an important part of being on the Board of Trustees and often included compromises. She wondered how Mr. Heinemann defined compromise. Mr. Heinemann stated compromise was about give and take, but both parties needed to win. He felt one of the most important things that needed to occur before compromise were conversations with the other person to understand their point of view. He stressed that most of the time, the end results both parties wanted were the same.

Trustee Nicolet asked what Mr. Heinemann hoped to accomplish on the Board of Trustees and why. Mr. Heinemann remarked he primarily wanted to provide stable government over the remainder of the term. He wanted to ensure communication with stakeholders was open and honest, with all sides knowing they had been heard. Successful completion of the Superintendent Search was critical, including the support of the community and schools. Finally, it was important to ensure all school districts in Nevada had the appropriate resources so schools and staff no longer had to do more with less.

Trustee Smith wondered what unique voice, experience, or perspective Mr. Heinemann would bring to the Board and how that would impact the quality of the decisions the Board made. Mr. Heinemann explained he was a recent graduate in the District. He was proud of the education he received and wanted to give back to the District and the community. He was also a recent long-term and short-term guest teacher in the District, so he was able to see what was now occurring in the schools from a different perspective. He expressed concern over the lack of stability both students and staff were feeling in the schools so it would be important to bring back a sense of predictability.

Trustee Church inquired as to what was one thing Mr. Heinemann would change in the District. Mr. Heinemann mentioned he would be a fierce advocate for additional funding from the state because it was critical to address the inequities students were facing, especially those that were emphasized during the pandemic. He was hopeful the District would utilize the American Rescue funds in such a manner that would show the state what the schools could do with additional funds.

President Taylor asked, specifically, what were the most important leadership skills needed to be a successful Board member. Mr. Heinemann stated the ability to provide management oversight and not get "into the weeds" and go in to try to solve problems. The Board was responsible for overseeing the Superintendent, so they needed to be able to delegate and allow Dr. McNeill to do the work. The ability to love all students was also important so no one felt ignored. Collaboration and the ability to work as a team, especially at this time, had to occur as well.

President Taylor opened the floor to follow-up questions.

Trustee Rodriguez wondered, as a full-time student, if Mr. Heinemann had the support system and time to commit to the serving on the Board. Mr. Heinemann stressed that he did and would be graduating in May, which would free up additional time for the Board.

Mr. Heinemann provided closing remarks. He stated he had repeatedly showed his interest and commitment to the District. He was interested in providing a younger, fresh perspective on the Board and wanted to ensure the education students received was the best education they could receive.

President Taylor recessed the meeting for 15 minutes.

President Taylor opened the meeting to public comment.

Katy Simon Holland was the former Trustee of District G. She thanked all members of the Board, and the candidates, for their interest and commitment to serving the students and community. She spoke in support of Adam Mayberry to fill the vacancy in District F. She understood the importance of having experienced public leadership during challenges times and believed his commitment, education, compassion, and experience would serve the Board well.

Valerie Fiannaca believed Adam Mayberry appeared to be the most qualified candidate; however, she urged the Board to halt the proceedings until it had been determined if the votes taken by former Trustee Jacqueline Calvert, to include the deciding vote for Trustee Joe Rodriguez, were legal.

Pablo Nava Duran felt the Board had a difficult decision because all of the candidates were very good. He provided remarks regarding the benefits each candidate could bring to the Board if selected, but his first choice to fill the vacancy was Jack Heinemann since he would provide a bridge to the younger generation.

Shannon Coley agreed with the remarks provided by Katy Simon Holland.

The Board received emails from the following:

Jeffrey Capurro	Councilwoman Charlene Thomas-
Jon Porter	Bybee
Jenni Espinoza	Stephanie McCurry
Galdina Espinoza	Annie Marantette
Christian Arroyo	Betty Hicks
Cesar Marquez	Jose Chaidez
Brian Beffort	Kimi Cole
Adela Quiroz-Perez	Natalie McMillen
Gamaliel Enriquez	Mylan Hawkins
Lucille Adin	Manny Becerra
Hawah Ahmad	Jesse Bullock
Marines Cano	Rachel Fisher
Michael Bisello	Maria Skolnick
Donald Abbott	José Montesinos
Paula McDonough	Dinah Maher
Paul Lenart	Chris Knox
Kristy Demmin	Christine McAvoy
Councilman Kristopher Dahir	Elvira Diaz
Shirley Diaz	Abbi Whitaker
Joseline C	

President Taylor opened the Board discussion on the candidates.

Each Trustee thanked all the candidates for their interest in serving on the Board. They provided their thoughts on each candidate and what they were looking for in a colleague. The Trustees noted the final decision would be extremely difficult because there were three outstanding candidates who would each bring a different perspective that was needed on the Board.

President Taylor reviewed the process to be used to rank the candidates.

The Trustees filled out their ballots with the votes as follows:

Trustee Church

Adam Mayberry – 3

Jack Heinemann – 2

Trustee Minetto

Adam Mayberry – 3

Jack Heinemann – 2

Trustee Nicolet

Adam Mayberry – 3

Elvira Diaz – 2

Jack Heinemann – 1

Trustee Rodriguez

Jack Heinemann – 3

Adam Mayberry – 2

Elvira Diaz – 1

Trustee Smith

Jack Heinemann – 3

Elvira Diaz – 2

Adam Mayberry – 1

President Taylor

Adam Mayberry – 3

Jack Heinemann – 2

Elvira Diaz – 1

The totals were as follows:

Adam Mayberry – 15

Jack Heinemann – 13

Elvira Diaz - 6

President Taylor noted the Board could either select the candidate with the top number from the votes or move onto a second round of voting with the top two candidates, if that was the pleasure of the Board.

It was moved by Trustee Minetto and seconded by Trustee Church that **pursuant to Nevada Revised Statute (NRS) 386.270, the Board of Trustees appoints Adam Mayberry to fill the vacancy on the Board of Trustees in District F to serve in the position until January 2, 2023 at midnight.**

President Taylor opened the motion for discussion.

Trustee Rodriguez mentioned he was open to a second round of votes because the tally was so close for the top two candidates.

Trustee Church agreed; however, he believed Adam Mayberry was prepared to hold the seat immediately based on his past experiences in government service and on other boards.

The result of the vote was Unanimous: (Yea: Jeff Church, Ellen Minetto, Diane Nicolet, Joe Rodriguez, Beth Smith, and Angela Taylor.) Final Resolution: Motion Carries.

President Taylor administered the Oath of Office to Adam Mayberry so he could immediately assume the duties of school trustee.

3. Closing Items

3.01 PUBLIC COMMENT

Pablo Nava Duran congratulated Trustee Mayberry on his appointment. He noted the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) had approved the Pfizer COVID vaccine for children ages 5 – 12. He would like to see the District provide opportunities for students to receive the vaccine, if that was the desire of the parents. He believed the more students who were vaccinated, the better the chances of schools remaining open. He would be interested in seeing mandatory vaccines, but only for high school students.

The Board received an email from Will Harper

3.02 ADJOURN MEETING

There being no further business to come before the members of the Board, President Taylor declared the meeting adjourned at 10:47 a.m.

Angela D. Taylor, President

Diane Nicolet, Clerk