

KING PHILIP REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 15, 2018
King Philip Regional High School - Library
201 Franklin Street, Wrentham, MA 02093

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Francomano, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02PM.

ROLL CALL OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Members Present:	Norfolk: Jeff Chalmers, Michael Gee, Kenneth Dow
	Plainville: Patrick Francomano, Samad Khan, Charlene McEntee
	Wrentham: Jim Killion, Erin DeStefano, Trevor Knott
Members Absent:	Norfolk: Jeff Chalmers
	Plainville: Present
	Wrentham: Present

The meeting is being videotaped by Wrentham Cable. Mr. Francomano explained that the public may visit the district's website at www.kingphilip.org to review informational documents pertaining to each school committee meeting. Videotaped meetings may be viewed in their entirety at www.wrenthamcableaccess.com Mr. Francomano also explained the procedure for public comment.

Delegations and Visitors:

Mr. Hardy, MASC

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Superintendent Search Update – Finalist Interview

Mr. Francomano welcomed everyone and announced the withdrawal of candidate Glenn Brand from the superintendent search at King Philip.

Mr. Francomano proceeded to review the format for tonight's interview with candidate Mr. Paul Zinni. There will be a 5 minute for Introduction, followed by questions from the committee and then questions from the public which must be received no later than 6:30pm.

Candidate Paul Zinni, currently the superintendent in Avon, gave an overview of himself.

He has spent 30 years in public education starting in Taunton Special Education. Avon is Pre-K thru 6 and 7-12, a small district. He spent 12 years as director of pupil services. 4 years as superintendent. When asked why King Philip, Mr. Zinni explained that he has grown children, realized it is a good time to transition. He has extensive background and varied; offers a great skill set for King Philip.

Mr. Francomano asked for questions from the Committee.

Interview question from Erin DeStefano: How you plan to work with the three feeder towns to improve collaboration and support for KP?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Avon is a large choice school and has many students coming from many different communities, frequently Holbrook and Avon, where there is a collaboration on programs, teams etc. First steps are about visibility; meeting with town managers and town departments, etc. Push out the good news at each step – world class education. Need to push the word out where students are

attending college, superintendent going to elementary events. Created a news blog on Avon's district website that feeds to *Facebook* and *Twitter* and get the word out to parents of students who are not in the district yet. Meet with parents who do not have children in the district.

Interview question from Pat Francomano: As a result of meeting with the three elementary superintendents, what was your evaluation of that meeting and what might you do at KP as a result of this meeting?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Encouraged that there is collaboration with the 3 districts, the candidate's background is special education and encouraged by the collaborative programs. More shared programs; staying in the district prior to transition was good to see.

Interview question from Ken Dow? How would you spend your first 6 months and what would your priority be?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Meeting with as many people as possible; increase visibility was the primary theme that he has heard throughout the previous meetings. Need to observe what is going on, but not in an evaluating position – observing only. Attend events in the schools and meet the three town stakeholders. Need to gather more data in order to determine the priorities.

Interview question from Mr. Khan: What do you hope learning looks like in your school? How do you communicate that vision?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Look for objectives while visiting the classroom, look at curriculum documents, looking for interactive learning in the changing environment. In Avon, students are coding from K-12, how to research in technology, thinkers, quality writers, etc. Why? Higher order thinking questions? Thinkers, work collaboratively.

Interview question from Mr. Killion: Why are you looking to leave Avon?

Response from Mr. Zinni: 13 years in Taunton then many years in Avon and after 5 years, I am ready for transition. Now is the correct time for the move and transition. Need 5 years for a change to take place. Right time to move on.

Interview Question from Mr. Killion: How do you handle the budget shortfall with the towns and challenges?

Response from Mr. Zinni: I am a storyteller. It is important for people to understand what they are voting on. In Avon, departments are asked what level services plus then pare down the budget then cut to a reasonable figure to bring to the towns. Administrative team needs to make the decision collectively – no one person should make the decision alone. Always preserve the quality education for the students. 10-15% of budget is discretionary most is fixed. As educators, speak about cuts on town floor and then cuts are not usually as bad as expected – “crying wolf” Need to establish a trust factor.

Can you expand on the grant writing issue?

Started in Title 1 in 1994 and never stopped writing grants. As Superintendent, I work closely with administrative team to write grants as well as with collaborative. Very comfortable writing grants. Created rotary program in the Avon school district – wanted transparency, rubrics for scholarships, interact with clubs at the high school (rotary for students) Theme is service over self. Collaborated with the council on aging and students. Interact students on half- days' tutor seniors on personal technical devices. Seniors personalize students.

Interview question from Trevor Knott: How has your budget increased year over year?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Budget increase is 4-5% each year. Tough year this year came in at 6.8%. Working on a parking lot capital project - \$1.5MM; worked with selectmen to create stabilization for the parking lot, but still need \$300K, but asking to release funds early.

Interview question from Charlene McEntee: Referring to presentations on professional learning communities and virtual learning communities and how would you bring this to the elementary level.

Response from Mr. Zinni: Professional learning communities bring teachers together and work effectively currently in the elementary school. At MS/HS working to schedule time for teachers to work collaboratively.

Virtual platforms – always relied on virtual courses in Avon. Heavy supplements for virtual HS. Sharing classes with other towns- Holbrook and West Bridgewater. Realign schedules to work with other towns. Worked with collaborative and create a platform where teachers in communities teach a virtual class to the 89 communities in collaborative. Local teachers – local control and get more teachers to use local virtual versus virtual High school. Excellent professional development – SCRO collaborative. Local virtual collaboration saved the math AP class when teacher went out on leave early year.

Interview question Mr. Gee: KP is lean, tell us about your leadership style and how it would translate to KP.

Response from Mr. Zinni: I have worn many hats and this is a strength I can bring to KP; enticing to work with curriculum. Leadership style is collaborative, however, there are times when the superintendent needs to make a decisive decision in an emergency. Consultation is key, bring others together to make the decisions. What strategic plan should look like? What should PD look like? Once a decision is made, expects administrative team to work in that direction. Collaborative to me means all voices have been heard, not necessarily agree but have been heard.

Interview question from Mr. Khan: How would you plan to be a leader to other teams than administration, food services etc.?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Believes it is very important to move people up when warranted. In Avon, created mentorship programs with two head teachers. Met with food services and set up mentor program with East Bridgewater food services. Looked at all options – met collaboratively with other towns. Programs have been successful. Only staff member in Avon that has a professional license in reading, served as teacher practitioner for staff needing licensing.

Interview question from Mr. Knott: Noted KP is doing very well, but despite being one of the more affluent districts we have not been funded at the 5% level. The three communities who are in very different places when it comes to KP – How do you help get us out of this?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Really need to observe first. Understand the three different places that the communities are in and what does that mean to KP. Dig deeper to find out what is going on with the community – expect to get into the communities to understand. Focus groups with parents at elementary level – get to the heart of things. What are the arguments against funding the schools? Understanding what the problem is helps to understand it better; need to have time to assess. Recognize and clear that there is an issue with the tri town scenario. Recognize the problem and work towards the solution.

Interview question from Mr. Dow: Communities want to talk about KP, but not fund KP. How would you address this issue?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Parents of students who have a stake usually support the funding. Will need to get to the townspeople who do not have students to take ownership. Get seniors to have lunch during

dress rehearsals. Offer as many opportunities to get people into the school buildings that are not planning on coming into the school.

Interview question from Mr. Gee: Speak about experience with crisis management, safety and technology.

Response from Mr. Zinni: In Avon, crisis team/committee works together. ConnectEd recently sent out. Crisis team at district level created with town dept. head, parents and admin etc. ALICE trained. \$350K of expenses identified to make the school safer. Hired consultant to map out schools to create a resource box for safety depts. Conversations for plans for emergencies and need to work better on how students would be released. Looking at professional development for cyber bullying and parent workshops. Student risk study in Avon, reported that the students reporting substance abuse 2X state average; hired a grant paid coordinator and now half of the state average in substance abuse. Keeping students safe is paramount.

Interview question from Mrs. McEntee: Everyone has a shortfall, can you be honest about a shortfall and how you work on correcting this shortfall?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Feels the administrative team would say his shortfall is to make sure that whenever we have a meeting to come out with a product. In conversations, make sure ideas are not only generated, but make sure there is follow through.

Interview question from Killion: Met with Avon student groups – 188/726 kids are school choice (Randolph and Brockton) Concern of student retention in Avon % is high? Talk about why attrition in Avon happened and the methods for student retention.

Response from Mr. Zinni: As a choice district in Avon, 8th grade students have a large percentage making choices other than Avon. Created survey to understand why students are leaving Avon. Blue Hill Vocational Tech successfully market to Avon students as well as private and charter schools. Class size is capped at 22 grades 4+, it is a small district 66 students per grade. Avon does not have the ability to offer many varied courses since the district is so small – clubs, teams etc. Total 726 students - 88 choice, 78 teacher staff. Most departments run 5 teachers. Scheduling is difficult since limited flexibility. Leads to regionalization conversations with other towns. Proud of what we do with the limited resources and size that we have.

Interview question from Mr. Knott: KP also has a problem with students leaving after 8th grade. Well over index of students leaving even given that we have great clubs and teams.

Response from Mr. Zinni: Need PR on your website, need to see where the students who are graduating and where they are going. Need main lobby bulletin board where senior graduates are going, number of AP offerings. Need to understand the value of a KP education. Need to get the word out.

Response question from Mrs. McEntee: Example of situation of where you had to exert firmness with students and staff and the outcomes?

Response from Mr. Zinni: Background of behavioral issues so comfortable working with those students. One point, teacher gave notice one week before school started – contract states 30 days' notice. Held teacher to contract of 30 days, moving district moved start date and teacher did not show up to work – new district did not start her until start date and consequences to unethical behavior.

Interview question from Mr. Dow: What are your experiences with multi-cultural experiences? What would you do to help students understand and accept different cultures? Helping students to understand diversity in KP population being less diverse.

Response from Mr. Zinni: Diversity is a broad topic beyond ethnicity. Avon has a diverse population of students – most of the diversity was coming from school choice which has now changed. Avon this year

for the 1st time is considered a minority population school. Opportunities with technology to partner with students from more diverse districts. Create opportunities to collaborate – do not want to paint a picture to collaborate rather than provide a service.

Interview question from Mr. Killion: SPED costs at KP are significantly increasing, “funds following student’s methodology.” What is your thought process on balancing the out of district costs and bringing students back into the district?

Response from Mr. Zinni: First, refocus thinking about the budget. Do not blame on one department, i.e., special education. Continue to provide the highest quality education for ALL students. However, there are many opportunities to restructure special education and reduce costs. Again, work collaboratively with other towns. Built various in house programs. Teacher assistant staff are assigned primarily 1-1. Observe every student has the opportunity to learn on their own. Adequately staff and assign the staff. Transportation costs need to be reviewed as well, brought some drivers in house. Worked with collaborative to look at other cost reductions. Can create a collaborative program within the three communities without going to collaborative. Push the towns to work collaboratively.

Mr. Zinni gave a Summary Statement: Mr. Zinni thanked the school committee members for all their volunteer work. Easy to see that KP has a tremendous amount to be proud of, but many people in town do not know about it. Need a person to tell that story and to bring the towns together. Need a person who understands the budget and special education background and believe I am the person who can bring those qualities to KP.

Mr. Francomano announced a 5-minute recess at 8pm. The Meeting was called back to order at 8:05pm.

Mr. Francomano announced that the next school committee meeting will be held on Monday, February 26, 2018 at 7pm in which it will be a single-item agenda to choose a superintendent. Each team will recap their site visits to the full committee and each members and any member who has feedback regarding the candidates is asked to please forward that information to the school committee. Each member will have the opportunity to discuss pros and cons about each candidate.

Mr. Francomano asked that Mr. Hardy reach out to all groups who met directly with the candidate and ask them to provide a statement prior to the meeting to be held on February 26, 2018. This would include the administrative team, elementary superintendents and town administrators.

ADJOURNMENT:

✚ At 8:11pm, a Motion was made by Mr. Khan, seconded by Mrs. McEntee. All in favor by roll call vote. Yes (8); No (0). Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen Wolf
Recording Secretary*