

Alexa Garvey, Chairwoman called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the District Office Board Room, Pawcatuck, CT. Members present were Alisa Morrison, Jack Morehouse, Farouk Rajab, and Heidi Simmons. Members Absent: Candace Anderson, Board Secretary and Craig Esposito. Also present Ana de Oliveira, Recording Secretary and interested citizens.

Interview of Independent Investigator Candidates

First Interview:

DeLuca Advisory Services (DLA) was represented by Joseph DeLuca, Patricia O'Connor, Victoria Woods, Thomas Murray, Ryan Rafferty, and Michael Carroll. Each of the firm's associates gave a brief summary of their experience and professional background. Mr. DeLuca shared his vision of how they would approach the independent investigation, what the timeline would be of the investigation, confidentiality, and policy and procedures.

The Board asked questions of the firm such as, how the firm would reach out to people, how they would handle trust and confidentiality, first strategies, average hourly rate for services, where the interviews would take place such as would they meet off site, and would they reach out to the reporter following the story. The firm answered the Board's questions.

Second Interview:

Christine Chinni shared her experience in this type investigation, her process of conducting the investigation, confidentiality, record review, timeline, and policy. She spoke on climate and would give recommendations on this issue. Ms. Chinni commented the investigation would take approximately two months to complete if the Board wanted to go back to as far as 2013, if they wanted to go back further it would take longer. She shared a cost estimate and a breakdown of how she would perform the investigation with the Board members. She added she would be doing all interviews herself and would report back to the Board periodically. The report would be presented in written form.

The Board members had questions for Ms. Chinni such as, her training in investigations and law enforcement. Ms. Chinni voiced she did not believe a background in law enforcement is the right type of background for this investigation. The Board asked if the meetings would be held off site, would the reporter be approached for information, and how would students be identified in the report without disclosing names. Ms. Chinni answered the Board's questions.

Third Interview:

Paula Anthony spoke on her background, scope of the investigation and interviewing process. Once the investigation is complete she would submit a report in written form. She reviewed attorney client privilege and would make recommendations if the Board would like them. She reviewed confidentiality, and noted FERPA would apply to students. She would use a number system to keep student names confidential. Timeframe for the investigation was also discussed.

The Board asked Ms. Anthony how she would build up trust again in the community, her hourly rate, how she would make herself available and her approach, would she reach out to the reporter, and how would she find those students that were impacted. Ms. Anthony answered the Board's questions.

Discussion and Possible Action on Selection of Independent Investigator:

Alexa Garvey, Chairwoman distributed paper ballots and directed the Board members to write their first choice of those interviewed. Chairwoman Garvey read each ballot, noting there were four votes for Christine Chinni which came from Alexa Garvey, Farouk Rajab, Alisa Morrison and Heidi Simmons and one vote for DLA from Jack Morehouse. Each Board member voiced why they choice a specific investigator. Jack Morehouse voiced he supported the decision of using Ms. Chinni. The Board discussed how the final report would be delivered. The Board also discussed their views on the use of the school attorney in regards to attorney client privilege, which was not favorable among some Board members. The Board discussed how communications would work with the investigator. Chairwoman Garvey will reach out to Christine Chinni to discuss an engagement letter. She noted the Board will approve this at the March Board meeting.

Comments from the Public Related to step Action on this Agenda:

Rob Simmons commented that it was nice to see the Board work together as a team, adding that is a beautiful thing.

Faith Leitner commented she observed more team playing between the Board members, who she added are going in the right direction. She voiced she liked the choice the Board made for the investigator. She added she hoped the attorney would go back to 2004 with her investigation. She would like every student to be able to talk about their experience.

Board Comments or Concerns:

Jack Morehouse agreed with Ms. Leitner's comment he too hopes this goes back to 2004 with the investigation. Farouk Rajab added we can do an investigation from 2013 to 2019 but if we need to peel one more layer than we can go further. Mr. Morehouse commented we owe it to the students that potentially had this happened to them to give them an opportunity to vent and explain what happened, and have us gain that knowledge and put that into a report because it is important to them and us. Heidi Simmons voiced that the Board should not make it public that we have a constraint on how many years we are going to do the investigation, but we say that this is a total investigation, we can't put a specific time limit on it and wants students to be comfortable even those that were affected fourteen years ago.

Adjournment

The following motion was made by Farouk Rajab and seconded by Heidi Simmons.

Motion 1: To adjourn at 8:18 p.m.

All: Aye

Alexa Garvey, Chairwoman