

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE COMMON COUNCIL
VALPARAISO, INDIANA
SCHOOL BOARD APPOINTMENT INTERVIEWS
May 15, 2023 – Second Round**

The Common Council of the City of Valparaiso, Indiana, met in special session on Monday, May 15, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. in City Hall. Councilmember Casey Schmidt called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Attorney Patrick Lyp advised all Councilmembers are present. However, they are sitting in the audience seats. The five candidates for the school board appointment are seated at the dais. There are 15 questions. The 16th question is giving each candidate two minutes to say anything they want to the Councilmembers. The order will be changed each time. Attorney Lyp will read each question once. Each candidate has the questions in writing in front of them also. Each candidate will have approximately 1 ½ minutes to answer each question.

Councilmember Cotton asked if all questions are from the public?

Attorney Lyp – They received 45 questions. Councilmembers Pupillo and Reed worked with him to “mesh” the questions together.

Q1 – What motivated you to apply to serve on the Valparaiso School Board

Karl Cender – His children went through Valparaiso community schools and received a very good education. This is a way for him to ensure that we continue the same excellent standards and do it for all our kids in Valpo. It is a way for him to give back to the community. His financial background is a way for him to contribute to the schools.

Ashley Kruse – She values education and what it offers. It is important to ensure we are providing a high quality education for all of our residents. She values giving back to the community.

Clay Patton – He went through Valpo schools K-12. He has two children attending Valpo schools. The success of the schools is vitally important to him. He is committed to making a difference for the community and the school system. He believes serving on the School Board is the next best way for him to do so. Having two children in the school system, he will approach issues facing the School Board not only as a resident, taxpayer, business owner and attorney, but also as a parent. He will also have the perspective of the students.

Alison Quackenbush – She is a 22 year resident of Valparaiso. This is the right time to serve. She is a business owner. She has served on many boards. She was a middle school teacher. For the past 22 years she has been an entrepreneur. She has experience in business management, finance, re-negotiation of debt, contract management, and regulatory compliance. She would like to see the Board represent more parents to students.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – He has three children in the school system. As a parent it is important to him to see a community that surrounds its school with love and takes care of the students. His role would be to make sure that is being done. He has been a superintendent. There is nothing he hasn't done in a school district where he couldn't bring some level of expertise to the Board. It would be a detriment if he did not offer his ability to help.

Q2 – What books or other material about education have you read in the past five years? Describe an insight you took away from your reading that would be applicable to serving on the Valparaiso School Board.

Clay Patton – He has not read books about education policy and procedures in the past five years. He has read and enjoys reading autobiographies about figures in various fields such as sports, military, academia, government, law, and politics. He believes doing a deep dive into someone's history helps you gain a better understanding of where they are coming from, why they did what they did and maybe why they believe what they believe. Having that understanding of people and their reasonings can assist him as a Board member to collectively work together for students and teachers.

Alison Quackenbush – She has a degree in education. The books in her bookshelf are huge in relation to education. She is now parenting the ages she taught. She has had people approach her since she applied for School Board member. She has received a copy of the last several years of Indiana State School Board meeting minutes. She is reading a book on the gap in achievement of men.

Ashley Kruse - She is an avid book reader. She reads from child development and parenting perspective. She has a child who has a speech delay. She has read books on this. She has worked with great therapists that have taught her a lot. Besides reading she listens to Podcasts.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – Part of his current role is to stay informed. His job is to read that and break it down to share with his customers as to what is going on in education and what is going on that could be impacted by the technology they are working with. Over the last five years he has read everything from educational technology books to school improvement and educational leadership. One of his favorite is a reference book by Hattie that talks a lot about developmental education and how you start the process.

Karl Cender – In the past five years he has attended many of the Indiana School Board Association conferences. At those he gets a lot of material on educational topics. He also attends the regional meetings that give updates on legislature and law. His take away is that education is always changing and they are dealing with new challenges all the time. So they really have to keep up. The laws are always changing on the referendum process.

Q3 – What is your understanding of the special education programs offered by Valparaiso Schools? Do they have equal access to the same resources as general education teachers? If not, what would you do to address this disparity?

Ashley Kruse – She has a child that is in the programs. So she has first hand knowledge of what is available. She has spoken to parents who have children in these programs. Overall the feedback has been positive. They have been happy with the teachers, the resources and the inclusiveness of the different schools. There is a confidence that Valpo has the right administrators in place to continue to grow the program and evolve it as the needs of the District change.

Clay Patton – His oldest daughter is a Gen Ed learner but she has been on the United Football and United Track and Field teams. In December the Porter County Education Services met and decided to restructure the services of special education. The teachers will be directly employed by Valparaiso Community Schools instead of the collective board with the County. He believes that will allow the Valpo Community Schools to better recruit and retain the teachers and paraprofessionals.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – He is used to Special Ed from the administrative side. He believes moving from a co-op program will make a huge difference. The professional development will be closely aligned as well as the curriculum.

Alison Quackenbush – She taught in a full inclusion model. She believes moving from a co-op program is beneficial. She is not sure if they can assess disparity right now because there is such a transition. There should be an allocated differentiated budget for special ed.

Karl Cender – Valpo Schools have been part of the Porter County Interlocal for many years. There is a new agreement and Valpo will have more authority to recruit, deploy, develop and in higher compensation levels than what they were previously earning. This should help with the inclusion of students.

Q4 – In the first round of interviews some candidates were asked about the term CRT or Critical Race Theory. What is your understanding of CRT?

Alison Quackenbush - She understands that in CRT they believe that racism is inherit based on our laws and institutions in order to maintain social and political economic inequity between whites and nonwhites. She has reviewed social study standards in three states. She has taught social studies in two states. Based on that and her understanding of CRT, the subject requires an interdisciplinary approach of economics, legal, polysi, politics, science, and history. This is beyond a K-12 education. It is not appropriate for K-12.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – This is not something he would look at doing at the K-12 level. His concern is that CRT has become a way to attack the teaching of things that might be controversial. History should be taught in full.

Karl Cender – His understanding is that CRT is the history of racism and the impact it has had on society. It was developed at the university level and he would agree it is more appropriate at that level. CRT is not part of Indiana Department of Education’s standard or practice and is not being taught in Valparaiso Community schools.

Clay Patton – Last time part of his answer was that he is not sure everyone knows what it is. He went to Encyclopedia Britannica on line and the definition of CRT is – Intellectual and social movement and loosely organized framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural biologically ground feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed culturally invented category that is used to oppress and exploit people of color. He is not sure he understands what that all means so to put that in front of a K-12 student he doesn't think would accomplish anything. He agrees with everybody else this is something that is more for a college course.

Ashley Kruse – Critical Race Theory means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. It is important to understand what it means to everyone. CRT was evolved at a high level and that is where it needs to stay. It means there are different forms of bias that are not blatantly obvious in everyday life. It is important at K-12 to focus on critical thinking, challenging stereotypes, and consider alternative viewpoints in our education.

Q5 – What is your vision of an accessible school board to community members?

Curtiss Strietelmeier – Accessibility means transparency. Transparency can be through meetings or personal conversations. The key is to let them know what you are doing. If they don't trust what you are doing they are not going to feel you are accessible and they will not be there for you when you need them.

Karl Cender – If anyone has a question the best way is to send an email and he will get back to them with an answer. It may take him a day or two to get an answer. He will talk to people any time.

Ashley Kruse – Her vision is a member is visible, present, available, and listening with intent, transparent and responsive to the needs of the community. She would like to see more community involvement.

Clay Patton – You can go to the Valpo School website and get all the administration's emails. They have open public meetings. The minutes are on line. As far as being accessible emails and phone calls. It says on the website you can contact members of the Board by calling the administration office during regular business hours. Being willing to have a conversation with anybody is being accessible.

Alison Quackenbush – She has attended Board meetings. On two different occasions she was concerned about a strategy approach so she reached out to Board members. They responded to her. That was being accessible. Last week she was on three different campuses. She spoke to three principals. That was being accessible. She is out there shopping and attending events. When it comes to the next referendum you can count on her to be out there and picking up the phone.

Q6 – Round One included two questions regarding school safety. Specifically the need for additional School Resources Officers and increasing school building safety. Guns brought into a

school facility, especially a student, pose a unique threat. Would you support the distribution of safe firearm storage reminders and material to parents and guardians?

Curtiss Strietelmeier – Easy access to firearms is one of the main issues that leads to school shootings. It is important to educate the community on gun safety. This is more impactful when it is part of a bigger project.

Alison Quackenbush – She supports anything that increases the safety of our community. Another example is when the school nurse sends home reminders.

Ashley Kruse – She will always advocate for better ways to keep our students and staff safe. Part of her educational philosophy is that students are being prepared to be lifelong learners.

Karl Cender – There is a good coalition with the VPD, VFD, and Porter County Sheriff. They are experts on safety and have done a good job. We should look to them for matters of safety and if that includes notifications to parents and guardians, he thinks we should do whatever we can to keep the kids safe.

Clay Patton – Any literature that goes home should be part of a program. The schools are responsible for the kids in the schools and on the buses. They need to be careful not to tell people what to do in their own homes. It could be a program where there is a police officer coming and giving a class on gun safety and the paper is going home in conjunction with that.

Q7 – Do schools have a roll in encouraging diversity and inclusion? If so, what programs would you encourage to support this?

Karl Cender – Yes. He feels they are doing this already with the unified sports, special education classes, supporting underprivileged kids, the dress for success program, and some of the school clubs that are after school.

Alison Quackenbush – She taught in the full inclusion model. Valpo is doing a great job. You can do identifiers where everyone belongs. When students feel they belong, classroom achievement accelerates and attendance is a higher rate. Teacher training might need to be in place for someone who needs to know how to handle inclusion. Some teachers need training to know how to handle conflict between students.

Ashley Kruse – The schools serve a diverse range of students and families. This helps our students be more well-rounded and confident. Students of diverse backgrounds will feel more comfortable. There would be strong role models in the school.

Clay Patton – Being made to feel like an outsider can have a negative impact on a student's mental health. He would see guidance on best practices from Dr. Hawkins, the Director of Social and Emotional Learning.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – Good schools welcome all students. They create an environment of respect and inclusion. A way to do this is diversification of staff. Make sure the curriculum is responsive to the students.

Q8 – There has been a national debate in recent years over matters relating to gender identity and how schools should best respond to balance the interest of all parties involved. From athletic inclusion, use of restrooms, and how to properly address a student, opinions differ. If appointed as a School Board Member, what principals would guide you in navigating these complex issues?

Ashley Kruse – These issues are complex in nature. It is important to consider the needs of all the parties involved. First she would make sure anything decided is in compliance with the law. Secondly she would make sure any decision includes respect for all students. Inclusion of all students is important. Extracurricular activities should be designed to ensure all students can participate. Privacy and safety is important -including restrooms and changing facilities. And through all, make sure the decision making process is transparent.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – How are you going to support and respect the student. There are many different laws that need to be followed but at the end of the day there is a student struggling with this change. Talk to administrators and see where their comfort level is. It is important to show respect to the teachers as well. When they are put in situations that are difficult, listen to them.

Alison Quackenbush – She has three principals she is focused on as a School Board Member. What she is responsible for? Academic achievement, safety for students and teachers, economic development. She has constraints. She also looks at who she is responsible to.

Clay Patton – He would look to see what Duneland Schools has done. He would seek advice from the School Board attorney on what are the legal requirements and restrictions. Essentially it boils down to what should we do, what can we do or not do to stay out of a courtroom and in compliance with the law and not paying monetary damages.

Karl Cender – He wants to make sure they follow State law so they are in full compliance. Also make sure they respect the rights of all students. Make sure teachers and staff have training to deal with any new procedure.

Q9 – What underfunded programs would you like to see more capitol devoted to?

Clay Patton – Paraprofessionals, support staff and bus drivers. A conversation should be held with administration, teachers, and other staff to see where there are gaps that need to be filled. They should invest in the programs that are going to assist the children in attaining future academic career success.

Karl Cender – They have done quite a bit with the capitol referendum money. He does enjoy the arts. If there are funds available, he would like to see them go to music, drama and the arts in general.

Curtiss Strietelmeier - Look at the middle school area and support for students who are starting to see education as harder than they would like. Any kind of extra resources to help stabilize their educational future. The other thing would be look at programming that would give career type certifications. At least they would graduate with a skill set and they are able to get employed right away.

Ashley Kruse – Underfunded could be subjective based on someone’s needs and wants. She is not sure she has enough information to know what is underfunded. If there is capitol she would like to see customized learning programs. Early intervention. Offering preschool classes.

Alison Quackenbush – Paraprofessionals receive comprehensive benefits package. Indiana requires they test for high ability on two occasions. They don’t mandate that they provide education for those that have been identified. The solution now is to be bumped up a grade or participate in after school teams. This is not an ideal solution. She would like to see a high ability math in grades 2, 3, 4, and 5. This is budget neutral and could be an economic driver as an attraction to our schools.

Q10. What do you see as the impact on Valparaiso Schools with continued community growth? What should Valparaiso Schools be doing to keep up with that growth? How do you think Valparaiso Schools will be impacted by this?

Curtiss Strietelmeier – As the community grows there will be more students. More students, more State dollars, more opportunities. But it puts a lot of stress on resources. Are there enough classrooms? Is there time to feed them in one day? Look and work with the City so they are aware of what is being built and where the increase will be in students.

Ashley Kruse – There will be an increase in students. There will be a strain on resources. There will be a change in demographics and socioeconomic factors and what type of programs or resources will be needed to support these individuals that are coming to our community.

Clay Patton – Need to keep an eye on all residential development in Center Township. The growth is most likely to be in north west Center Township. They should look at the possibility of buying acreage now in that area. They don’t need to build now. This is planning for the future.

Karl Cender – VCS about a year ago retained a demographer and he produced a report. His report doesn’t really show any substantial growth. We still need to pay attention.

Alison Quackenbush – When she lived in Naperville it was the fastest growing community in the country. One of the things they did well was partner with City developers to support the expansion of parks, libraries, and schools. Developers owned part of that expansion. We do need to look at land. She would like to balance short term expansion with long term constriction.

Q11. How familiar are you with the curriculum being taught in our school district? What areas would you address as needing the most improvement?

Ashley Kruse – She is more familiar with the curriculum on an elementary school level. She doesn't feel a school board member needs to be an expert on the curriculum. That is what the administrators and teachers are for. There should be a distinction between curriculum – the content being taught, and instruction- the way it is taught. There are State standards. The School Board can oversee and make sure the curriculum fits the needs.

Karl Cender – With his prior Board experience he feels he has a good understanding of the curriculum. The Board should look at all areas constantly to make sure they are making it better for greater learning.

Clay Patton – He is familiar with the curriculum as his daughters have progressed through the schools. There is always room for improvement. You don't want to get complacent. They can continue to look for ways to continue receiving the high ratings and for our high schoolers to earn college credit.

Alison Quackenbush – She has reviewed the State Standards as she became a co-partner with her kids teachers in homeschooling. There is a current effort to reduce state standards from 75 to 25 to make it easier to digest. That will happen this summer. The curriculum is difficult to understand. She would like to see curriculum nights at the schools for parents. At the minimum a sheet that goes out at the beginning of the year that summarizes the scope and sequence.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – This spring he participated in the math textbook adoption. He saw how teachers are involved in the process. He has a lot of faith in the teachers and administrators. They are the ones that follow the State guidelines more closely than the Board. Moving forward he would like to see what curriculum can be provided for students going to a trade school.

Q12 – Describe the achievement gap in this District. What causes it? What can be done?

Alison Quackenbush – She cautioned against assuming gaps in achievement are connected to socioeconomics. Valpo is able to buck the assumption. Central Elementary and TJ Elementary are both Blue Ribbon Schools and have some of the most underprivileged students in the District. Areas that do need to be looked at are: Special Ed services and para staffing models. Dyslexia and reading specialists trained at a greater number in the elementary years. Parent programming and parenting skills curriculum.

Karl Cender – Sometimes he thinks the achievement gap is the function of the individual child. We do have great teachers, aids, and administrators in the District. He is appreciative there are extra aids and social workers working with our children.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – In the elementary level we need to determine what resources need to be made available to provide a level of equity to make sure all students are getting what they need. At the high school level with the ISTEP scores, there are areas where we do poorly, especially in the minority area. We need to determine why the African Americans and Latino students are going under 30% and white students are going to 60% and 70%. A couple of schools have a high absence rate. Get the students there and make sure they have the resources.

Ashley Kruse – She thought this was a broad statement and not sure what type of achievement gap was being talked about. Achievement gaps require a multifaceted approach to support students that are struggling.

Clay Patton – He feels it is the socioeconomic factors that is the major cause of achievement gap in student performance. The last five years many programs have been started for students. Those can support students collectively. Individually it is instruction and getting the parents involved.

Q13 - What would you address with respect to the literacy challenges underprivileged students are facing presently?

Ashley Kruse – Early intervention and parent involvement is crucial. She has been happy with the literacy program at the elementary level. The teachers encourage reading at home. There are apps the students can use and there are a variety of programs. Parents need to be involved.

Alison Quackenbush – Pre-readiness programs are needed. The school should be the resource center for families so they know where to get help.

Curtiss Strietelmeier - Pre K readiness is key. This puts the students on an equal level with other students. Then rely heavily on teachers to integrate the right type of instructional methodology. Offer the right resources.

Clay Patton – The seniors of 2024 are the first class to have full day kindergarten. Focus on the early elementary years. If funding is available, have more aids help with reading. Getting the students into reading when they are young will help close the literacy challenges.

Karl Cender – He thinks they are doing a pretty good job of providing educational opportunities for all of the children. He would like to continue with summer school, extra tutoring after school and others. Preparedness for kids coming into school is important. Further engagement with parents and guardians and providing resources to them would be helpful.

Q14 – What is your understanding of social emotional learning? How do you think it is being taught in schools?

Clay Patton – According to the Indiana Department of Education, social emotional learning is sometimes referred to as character education, 21st Century skills, or Whole Child Education. It is the ongoing teaching, modeling, and enforcing the knowledge and skills essential to the wellbeing and personal and professional success. The components of that is regulation, recognizing and managing ones emotions, connection, collaboration, sensory motor integration, insight, critical thought process, and mind set.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – A large part of that is learning how to treat others with respect and understanding. The other part is how to be good to yourself. Anything that works and says we are a group and work together. This is a key to moving forward because the kids are going to have to learn to do it in the real world.

Karl Cender – He believes the seven core competencies are being taught in our schools to meet the standards produced by State law and the Department of Education. In kindergarten they learn how to respect each other. How to sit still. These are important things that we all learn and it will enhance our whole being as we prepare for our future.

Alison Quackenbush – Her understanding of this is teaching emotional regulation and personal responsibility. At Hayes they had the Year of Grit. They would talk about being tired and still being asked to do something. They taught the students to put names to feelings and how to deal appropriately. In the era of the cell phone and a disconnect from talking with parents this curriculum is more critical. One school has a mindfulness in yoga at the end of the school day. Problems on the bus went down when this program was instituted. VCS has therapy dogs.

Ashley Kruse – Social emotional learning is helping people develop the skills, knowledge, and attitude to manage their emotions. There are a lot of things children have to deal with that their parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles did not have to deal with. Social emotional learning helps them deal with these events and work through them and the feelings associated with them. It promotes a positive climate.

Q15 – Studies show a connection between student mental health challenges and the negative impact on a student's ability to function and learn in school. How would you better identify and address mental health issues of a student?

Ashley Kruse – This can be a complex and sensitive issue. It can be simple as well. We need to listen to students. At the end of the day a lot of times they express their need for help. We need to reduce the stigma associated with mental health and increase our awareness. Teachers, staff, and parents need to be taught how to identify mental health issues and how to respond to them. We need to provide resources.

Karl Cender – Through the Operating Referendum they were able to provide at least one social worker per building. There are more staff and aids working with the kids. He believes they are able to identify some of the mental health issues kids are experiencing.

Clay Patton – Recently he was talking with a coach. In the conversation it came up the amount of training coaches and assistant coaches are required to take. If this isn't a requirement for all teachers, it should be. It should be a requirement for all employees who interact with students on a daily basis. Sometimes the teacher has more contact with the student than the parents.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – One of the most important things that can be done is to make sure there is an adult at school that is listening to them. Make sure every child in the school knows there is an adult looking out for them.

Alison Quackenbush – In her first year of teaching she learned a lot of her students were not brushing their teeth. She went to dentists and got toothbrushes and had a dentist come in and do education. It was as simple as that, leaning in and listening. Valpo schools have great resources.

She talks with Dr. Hawkins regularly. There are many agencies that respond proactively. It is not always a crisis. Sometimes it is just about asking.

Q16 – Each candidate has two minutes to offer any final comments to the City Council.

Clay Patton – It would be an honor to serve on the Board of the Valparaiso Community Schools. He wants nothing but the best for his own children, family, friends, neighbors, and clients who have children in Valpo Community Schools. His daughter will be the 14th member of his family to be a high school student at VHS. When she graduates there will be an unbroken chain of 50 years where myself or my immediate family will be a VCS student. He would like to secure and build on the success of the past 50+ years. He told his wife they had to live here. When she asked why he said because of the schools. The strong school system continues to be an economic driver bringing businesses to the community. That will bring workers and their families and students to the schools. Or when someone decides they want to move back. People can say they can live wherever they want but it is going to be Valpo. They can say they are going to commute two days a week to Chicago, but they are going to live in Valpo. We need to continue that for the students we have now and make it attractive to them so they can come back and receive the same high quality in public education for their own children.

Karl Cender – With his prior experience of being on the Board many of the Council already know him, what his values are, and he promises to continue to serve with integrity if selected. His kids received a great education here. He believes it is important for our community that we continue our fine tradition. We want to continue to strive and do better for our kids so they have even greater opportunities for what they chose to do later in life. He has a finance background that can be very helpful and useful to the school. He looks forward to sharing with the school his background. He has enjoyed his time serving on the Board and our schools and the community. This is a way for him to give back. He would love the opportunity to serve again.

Alison Quackenbush - She appreciates the opportunity she has had so far. She has met additional people through this. She values that. She would be a great school board member. She is a trusted and respected community member. She has played roles already in the community. She started out as a middle school teacher. She has taught low income and nationally ranked districts. She has a wide variety of educational experiences. Her first job after leaving the classroom was with a reading educational software company. She sold to districts. She understands their buying cycles. For the past 22 years as a Valpo resident she has been an entrepreneur handling multi million dollar budgets. Navigating multidisciplinary teams of legal, accounting, operation, finance. She has re-negotiated contracts and refinanced debt. She has managed regulators in operational settings. She has children that have attended three Valparaiso schools. She has a strong community presence with lots of energy to communicate and advocate for our school and future referendums. She is a teacher, mom, and finance business professional. She thanks them for the opportunity to have gotten to know some of them.

Ashley Kruse – She does not envy them their decision. There are five really great candidates who are all bringing different skills, ability, and experience to the table. She is happy that candidates showed up. She is a parent who has children currently attending the schools. She is keenly aware of the challenges that schools face but she is optimistic of the improvements that

can be made and the growth they have the potential for. She is passionate about education. And understand the critical role the school board plays in insuring that every student has access to a quality education. She hopes they understand her experience and her experience working with other districts in Indiana and the Midwest to better understand educational best practices for student outcomes and increasing student accountability. She is an engaged, collaborative, analytical, tech savvy individual who will bring a different perspective to the Board.

Curtiss Strietelmeier – When you have been in education as long as he has you see everything from the classroom to the school board. Everybody has a great role and responsibility. Just to be considered for this job is impressive to him. He is extremely impressed by the other candidates. He felt smart until he walked in here and he realized the people he is surrounded by are really people who understand what is important in education for Valpo Community Schools. As a candidate for this position, he brings the idea of students who are in the school, students he is responsible for and has been able to take care of. There have been a lot of opportunities. He is somebody who wants to make sure everybody's child has that opportunity. As a School Board member, he wants to make sure that he knows no matter where a student comes from, by the time they walk out of Valparaiso High School they can say they were able to do what they wanted to do. Somebody cared about me. Somebody gave me an opportunity to go on to the next level. At the end of the day that is what we all want to do. We want to make sure the Valparaiso Community Schools continues the level of excellence it has had for many years. All the candidates would be able to do that. He appreciates the opportunity to be here and be with this group.

Councilmembers Discussion

Councilmember Anderson – This is the toughest decision he has had to make. He would be happy to have any one of the five. It is an interesting scenario where you have a majority Republican Council picking a Democrat to be on the School Board. We can have different world views that attach to our politics. He thought that would be more of a determining factor than it was. He likes what they all had to say. Good people are going to get left out that have the best intentions for all our kids. It is his thought that the financial expertise and acumen of Karl Cender is what he is most comfortable with moving forward. He has been tested during the toughest time of any School Board. He played a major factor of digging VCS out of a hole. He was very impressed with Ms. Quackenbush and Clay Patton.

Councilmember Cotton – He would like this number of applicants every time. Given the Republican makeup of the Council he would say it is the financial expertise they would say they are going to hang on to. In the first interview Karl acknowledged his expertise did not help us from the worst budget circumstance that we had. He said he was new. Much of what was endured was mitigated by referendum. That is not attributed to any one person. Ms. Quackenbush spoke about having lived in a setting and taught in a setting where you don't have a parent that can help. There is a deference on the part of your number one who thinks we are doing everything perfect right now. He feels there is an aggravating achievement gap based on racial minorities and particularly poor black kids. The reason the schools are so successful is not the Board. It is not their job. It is the people who pursue education for their

children in a manner that they are as vigilant as they are. There are too many things to mention that make the candidates wonderful. There are good and qualified black folks who are in the realm of academics. The infrastructure needs to look like you. At least reflect the population is one of the answers he heard. It is a huge thing to have every child there feel like someone has their back. There are three he would like to elevate. Karl doesn't have kids in the school now. Curtiss Strietelmeier, Alison Quackenbush and Ashley Kruse are his choices. Ashley stood out in his mind. She is a gold mine.

Councilmember Peterson – This is the most in depth board appointment process he is aware of. It is interesting to see what he would have predicted to be issues and what the issues really are. Everybody wants what is best for the children. Distribution of materials regarding public safety, diversity and inclusion including unified sports and social and emotional learning, community growth, achievement gap. There are literary challenges and mental health challenges. There are two candidates that stand out. They are Karl Cender and Clay Patton. He had hoped to hear more of what Jon Costas said last year and that is how to be an effective board member. A good board member brings different perspectives. He thinks Ms. Quackenbush and Mr. Strietelmeier have great experience in the school. Sometimes it is best to have someone who is not from that environment. Karl Cender's experience with the Board, and his support of the referendum is what edged Karl out for him to support.

Councilmember Costas – This is a hard decision. Everyone's answers today were similar. They were good answers. He is glad they have the applicants they have. It validates that the School Board is strong and there are parents who care. An argument to Karl not having kids in school, it is really easy to coach your kid's baseball team. But the coach who does not have a kid on the team and still wants the team to be the best, says a lot about that individual. He emailed all the references of all the candidates. Superintendent McCall could not say enough about Karl. After talking with the references and going through the interview process, he feels most comfortable with Karl.

Councilmember Pupillo – This is an incredible list of candidates. It is encouraging to see how many qualified people come out and want to be involved. It makes for a difficult decision. There were some great ideas that came up. Pre-K. Land acquisition. He hopes those carry on no matter what they decide today. Inflation is crazy. He is sure the schools are facing some of those issues as well. There is potential for an economic downturn. One of the key deciding factors on who they pick should have the financial acumen to manage financial stress. That is why he is supporting Karl. His references were good. He is tempered in the fire of COVID.

Councilmember Reed – In 2020 the Council had the opportunity to reappoint an individual who was an educator an outstanding and solid incumbent. Instead, this Council majority wanted a new face with fresh ideas so the incumbent was not reappointed. We have four very qualified applicants who would love to serve on the school board. They have children who currently attend the schools and they are invested in our community. The logic that was applied in 2020 to the appointment process should be applicable to 2023. We have a CFO at the school. There are other measures in place to protect and ensure we remain financially secure. We also have

referendum dollars as a backup. The current Board members are not in education. Having at least one member in education is important. They bring a different perspective. They bring insider knowledge. They bring balance to the Board. The individual who is leaving now was in education. She was a vital component to that Board. Alison Quackenbush is very knowledgeable and articulate. Ashley Kruse blew her out of the water. She spoke with no notes, just strictly from knowledge and expertise. That spoke more to her than anything else. Curtiss Strietelmeier has a wealth of knowledge and would be a great benefit to the school corporation. Clay Patton has the experience as well. Not in education but legal knowledge. Four very qualified people who want to serve. There were 14 applicants. If Karl were to be appointed, how many terms? Who is to say how many terms are enough? This is a good opportunity to appoint someone who will give a different perspective. Someone who has kids in the school community. Someone who is invested in their children's growth. Karl has done a fabulous job. It is time to move someone else into this position. If we appoint Karl that would be a fourth male. No representation of women. She doesn't want to do status quo. Other people deserve an opportunity. There are four other people who came here and want to be part of this process. Her first vote is Ashley Kruse. Curtiss Strietelmeier is right there. We all know who the majority is. We all know that no matter what Councilmember Cotton and she say the other Councilmembers have the ability to move however they wish. She hopes they take this into consideration. Even if they don't vote tonight, she would be in favor of that.

Councilmember Schmidt - There are solid candidates. A lot of good answers. A lot of tough questions. The experience of going from 14 down to five was tough. There is something to be said about staying with someone that everyone knows will do a good job. We all admit he will do a great job. We all admit he has been through the toughest times. He doesn't think Karl meant that when he came in he was new and that is why mistakes were made under his watch. He thinks what he said is that the schools were already in trouble when he came in and he turned it around. His references said he was an integral part in changing things around. Karl saved \$30 Million on bonding for the referendum. It is impressive that he still wants to be involved. Financially he is as good as they are going to get. He continues learning all the time. Karl is his first choice. If they want to run for City Council for 20 years, if they are doing a great job, what is the reason to not run? Karl is impartial. He does what is right no matter what. He responds to everyone. He stands with his decision that Karl is the one that deserves the appointment.

Councilmember Cotton – He asked to correct what he said. Karl was on the Board two years before the calamity. He was new but he had not just come in after the crash. The references are almost laughable. The Superintendent wants someone who is easy to work with. That is good but he is not surprised. He is surprised he used former Mayor Jon Costas. Jon said in his interview he was the one that recruited Karl. Now Jon may very well step out and who comes back in – Karl. If they want to run for City Council for 40 years, they have to get the people to vote for them. In this case, a Republican dominated Council appoints a Democrat to the Board.

Discussion ensued regarding the qualifications and process past and present for school board appointment.

Motion: Councilmember Schmidt moved to take a vote. Councilmember Pupillo seconded the motion.

Attorney Patrick Lyp – Historically the Council has written their choice on a ballot. He reads off the name and if there is a majority, then someone makes a motion.

Councilmember Cotton – Isn't that perfunctory? What is the difference between writing it on a piece of paper versus what we have already said?

Attorney Patrick Lyp – There were 5 votes for Karl Cender, 1 for Ashley Kruse and 1 for Allison Quackenbush.

Motion: Councilmember Schmidt moved to appoint Karl Cender to the School Board. Councilmember Pupillo seconded the motion. So approved with a 5-2 roll call vote.

Candidates were brought back into the Chambers.

Councilmember Schmidt – Thanks to everyone for going through this whole process. They had a good discussion and then voted. Karl Cender was voted to the School Board. They all were qualified candidates. He would like to see them all re-apply. They go through this process every year.

Councilmember Cotton - He advised the candidates that majority ruled. The two Democrat Councilmembers did not voter for Karl.

