

A Special Joint Meeting of the City Council and School Committee was held on Wednesday March 11, 2020 in the City Council Chambers, 2nd floor of City Hall, 45 School St., Brockton, MA. President Asack presiding. The meeting was called to order at 7:10pm with eleven City Council members present and seven School Committee members present.

**SPECIAL JOINT SESSION OF THE BROCKTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
AND THE BROCKTON CITY COUNCIL AGENDA**

**Council Chambers, 2nd. Floor, City Hall,
45 School St., Brockton, MA**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2020
7:00pm**

President Asack introduce Mayor Sullivan. Mayor Sullivan stated that President Asack will preside over the meeting and that he will not vote, except in the case of a tie. He thanked the Council President and the Clerk for their work preparing for this meeting.

175 Call of the meeting

Accepted and placed on file.

176 Officer's Return of Notice

Accepted and placed on file.

President Asack stated the purpose of this Joint Session is to vote on a candidate to serve out the balance of the unexpired term of Mark Linde to the Southeastern Regional School Committee. Any residents at least 18 years of age were able to send a letter of intent together with resumes as to applicant's background and qualifications to the City of Brockton Office of the City Clerk, 45 School St., Brockton, Ma 02301 no later than February 28, 2020. All of the Candidates have submitted their resumes prior to that date and are at least 18 years of age and residents of the City of Brockton.

The Clerk called the roll for attendance of the Joint Session and all members were present.

President Asack stated that for the meeting they were joined by Robin Zoll, South Eastern School Committee Chair, Tony Branch, South Eastern School Committee member and Mark Linde, who's position is being replaced and asked if any would like to speak.

Mr. Linde stated that he understood there was an excellent list of candidates. He stated this position was near and dear to his heart and wanted to thank all the people of Brockton who voted for him. It was a tough decision to leave the City and vacate the seat. He stated this position is more than a once a month meeting. Mr. Linde said he looks forward to seeing who is appointed and hopes that person stays with the election coming in November. President Asack thanked Mr. Linde for his service.

Mr. Branch thanked the joint session and reminded the panel that he was in the same position 3 ½ years ago. He said that in 2021. South Eastern Regional School is expected to have 945 students from Brockton. South Eastern Regional School department has high academic standards. He doesn't want the school to be viewed as a punishment, and this is moving in the right direction. He shared that as of yesterday, the school has implemented Facebook Live and now the public has access to the work the School Committee is doing.

President Asack welcomed all the candidates and thanked them for wanting to serve and for submitting their resumes.

President Asack stated each candidate will be given 3 minutes to make a statement to members. After each candidate has given their statement, the members will be given an opportunity to ask questions to each candidate. Then a vote will be taken to appoint a member to serve out the balance of the term of Mark Linde. In the event of a tie, additional balloting will be taken until a vote is reached. The candidates will come up in alphabetical order.

Nancy deMacedo-Fernandes was called to the podium.

Ms. deMacedo-Fernandes stated that she lives in Ward 5 and previously ran for the Ward 5 School Committee seat. She felt she should go for this position because we need someone who can represent our students and parents at South Eastern. The person should be someone in the mix with the kids that are in the neighborhoods and that can speak for them.

Councilor Nicastro asked if Ms. deMacedo-Fernandez was a registered voter to which she replied yes.

Councilor Mendes stated that she spoke with this candidate and impressed with the different activities she does in the City and thanked her for putting her name out there.

Vice Chair D'Agostino thanked her for applying for this and asked, as a South Eastern alumni what would you like him to be thinking about when considering his vote. Ms. deMacedo-Fernandez answered that she would like you to put someone in that would represent the people of Brockton.

School Committee T. Sullivan asked if appointed, would you run for reelection to which Ms. deMacdeo-Fernandez answered yes.

Councilor Lally said he was concerned about the future of the seat and will cast his vote for someone committed to South Eastern. He said it was overlooked for a long period of time that college was not for everyone and that a bachelor's degree is now the same as someone with a diploma and a trade. His vote is going to someone who with serve out the term then seek reelection. Ms. deMacedo-Fernandez asked if there were going to be any stipulations Councilor Lally stated we can't place stipulations on something like this and can't keep anyone from running for something based on your rights as a citizen of Brockton. Ms. deMacedo-Fernandez then stated she would seek reelection.

Councilor Thompson thanked her for stepping forward for the opportunity to serve your community. He continued that Mr. Linde spoke of the time demands that come with the position. He asked if her day job would allow flexibility to attend different meetings and events. Ms. deMacedo-Fernandez replied that she can schedule her own hours.

Ray Henningson was next called to the podium.

Mr. Henningson stated that he lives in ward 7 and was the former Ward 7 School Committee member for 2 years. He expressed thanks to Mr. Linde for his many years of service and said this is an important job with big shoes to fill. He believes his prior school committee experience would allow him to hit the ground running without any real learning curve. He stated he is a Vice President of Finance for a masonry supply company and has financial and budget experience. He was on the Conservation Commission for three years and was a former Board of Director for Proctor Day Nursery. He was recently elected Vice president of the Brockton NAACP, treasure for Frederick Douglas Neighborhood Assoc. and former treasurer for Trinity Catholic Academy. Because he works in the masonry trade, he understands the necessity for a variety for our youth and education in the trade fields. Mr. Henningson said that in his current position he has learned the trade field is very lucrative and one can not only make a great living but can fill a great need. There are thousands of good paying jobs going unfilled.

Vice Chair D'Agostino thanked him for applying for this and asked, as a South Eastern alumni what would you like him to be thinking about when considering his vote. Mr Henningson

answered he would like to bring most robust opportunities to children and that you do not need a four-year degree to be successful. There are multiple pathways to success.

Councilor Lally said he was concerned about the future of the seat and asked if appointed, would you run for reelection to which Mr. Henningson replied he would take this role very seriously and would seek reelection.

School Committee Rivas-Mendes thanked him for his interest and stated the number one priority on the school committee is student achievement. Her husband graduated from South Eastern and college and one of his biggest regrets is student loans. She asked how would you phrase to students who may not have the knowledge and are receiving pressure about college to receive the knowledge to educate themselves on their options. Mr Henningson replied that as a parent of a recent college graduate, he would break it down in monetary terms by explaining what salary and loan payments will look like.

Councilor Rodrigues stepped down.

School Committee T. Sullivan thanked him for putting his name in the hat. Committee member Sullivan knows there are a number of subcommittees though the School Committee and a big one is contract negotiations. He asked if you have experience in this. Mr. Henningson replied he does through negotiations with the custodians. He stated this was extremely successful saying the City hundreds of thousands of dollars. He also through his job deals with union and non-union people. School Committee Sullivan mentioned the budget is the biggest item to deal with and do you have an idea how to balance a budget. Mr. Henningson stated he does know how to balance a budget.

Councilor Thompson thanked him for stepping forward for the opportunity to serve your community. He asked to explain his availability and flexibility to attend different meetings and events along with the other organization he belongs to. Mr. Henningson replied that he can basically set his own schedule. In the two years while serving on the School Committee, he could remember two instances where he did not attend meetings.

Ossie L. Jordan, Jr. was next called to the podium.

Mr. Jordan thanked the panel for the opportunity to come before them. He stated that he knows some very well and served with many over the years. He stated doesn't have to retrain to come back, if you name it he has done it more than 10 or 15 times more than anybody else and has been through it all at a high level. He stated he would rather take questions that go over the many committees he has been on.

School Committee J. Sullivan stated that in the past Mr. Jordan took over a School Committee seat in Ward 6 after a death in office two terms ago. She said she found Mr. Jordan very fair, open minded, honest, respectable and relates well to all groups.

Councilor Rodrigues returned.

Councilor Lally said he was concerned about the future of the seat and asked if appointed, would you run for reelection to which Mr. Jordan replied he fill a hole between the City and South Eastern. He continued that for years there was no information on what was going on at the school and that Brockton sends a lot of money there. Mr. Jordan stated he would not seek reelection. Mr. Jordan included that he is retired and has all the time he wants for this role.

Vice Chairman D'Agostino asked, as a South Eastern alumni what would you like him to be thinking about when considering his vote. Mr. Jordan said he would like to strengthen the programs there now. There are several that have been there for a long time and could be tweaked to be more current. Some training is for entry level, with some tweaking students could be prepared for more. Mr. Jordan would also like to see the evening program looked at. He believes

students look at South Eastern as a regional school in its oldest terms and there is a need to change the image of the school from the 80s and 90s. Vice Chair D'Agostino asked for an example of a tweak that could be done. Mr. Jordan asked for an area and was given summer program. He went on that these programs end early in the day and would like to see these extended.

School Committee T. Sullivan wanted to mention that after you left the School Committee, Mr. Jordan stayed on the Green Roof committee for a year to redo the schools. School Committee Sullivan stated he was proud of him for giving up his time. He then asked what Mr. Jordan thinks of charter schools in Brockton. Mr. Jordan responded that there are two types of charter schools and the problem he has with them is that one size does not fit all. Those are the type of things we need to fight for our children. He also disagrees with the way the charter school was brought to Brockton, because at the time it came Brockton should not have been eligible.

School Committee Minichiello thanked him for applying for this position and mentioned that Mr. Jordan came on to fill the position of Mr. Healy when he passed. He came on at a time when there was a lot of emotion and that Mr. Jordan is a very dignified and well respected person. School Committee Minichiello asked is there an advantage to not seeking reelection after an appointment. Mr. Jordan said that when someone fills a seat, it often gives an advantage come election time. There are several skills that take most people take time to learn or go into training on the laws that relate with the schools. He believes that is unfair to someone filling a short term, who most often get reelected in the next election. The only area he stated he is less familiar with is the union contracts, other than that can get started right away. Mr. Jordan does not believe any other candidate is in the same position.

Gerson S. Monteiro was next invited to the podium.

Mr. Monteiro said he is a resident of Ward 3 and that this is his second time seeking this position, the last being when School Committee McAllister passed away. He explained that he is invested in the education of our youth as a teacher in Brockton for past 10 years at the middle and high school levels as a bilingual history teacher. Mr. Monteiro believes we are going through an important time with public education with many challenges that he would work hard to tackle. He said of the attributes he would bring are being a leader, a team player and an effective communicator. Mr. Monteiro said he also brings collective bargaining experience working for SEIU 88 as a representative. If appointed, Mr. Monteiro would do his best to create a shared vision for work and learning.

Councilor Farwell stated that everyone of the people here are outstanding. He said he was particularly pleased that Mr. Monteiro came forward again, particularly because he is a practitioner and know how important it is for a school committee to form policies, know the importance of the needs of a budget to reflect the system and can relate to students, parents and staff he also pointed out that Mr. Monteiro culturally represents a segment of the community. Councilor Farwell would hope that people could reach out to him to discuss the difference between academic pursuits or training in the trades.

School Committee T. Sullivan thanked Mr. Monteiro for putting his name in the hat and asked if he thought being a teacher at Brockton High was a conflict of interest. Mr. Monteiro did not feel there was a conflict but rather an advantage knowing what the teachers and students wanted and since this is a different school district. If this was for the Brockton School Committee, he believes it would be.

Councilor Lally said he was concerned about the future of the seat and asked if appointed, would you run for reelection to which Mr. Monteiro replied that he would run for reelection. He continued that politics is his second love after history and to say he would not seek further office would be a lie, but would not see that in the near future.

Councilor Rodrigues stated there is a severe disconnect between students and parents in our communities, especially when dealing with homes that non-English speaking homes. He asked what special skills do you possess that would be able to gap and reach those otherwise not involved parents. Mr. Monteiro thinks that situation would be similar to Brockton High. One skill is his language skills, being able to speak multiple languages. He would try to make the connection directly with the student also. He stated he would also call parents and didn't have an issue knocking on doors. Parents do not always know the benefits that are offered through our schools.

Vice Chairman D'Agostino apologized to Mr. Jordan for not thanking him at his time for his interest in this position. He then thanked Mr. Monteiro and asked, as a South Eastern alumni what would you like him to be thinking about when considering his vote. Mr. Monteiro stated he has the ability to connect with students and is a big proponent of vocational training and wishes Brockton High offered more of this.

Councilor Cardoso gave her congratulations to all involved in this process. She stated she was impressed with his resume. At a recent seminar she was at, one thing discussed that she would like is more training for trades with our immigrant community. Councilor Cardoso stated there is a stigma in the Cape Verdean community around not going to college. She thinks having someone who understands the culture and can educate parents around that. She asked how does he feel about the cultural aspect he brings to the table and how some of the negativity can be changed. Mr. Monteiro answered that it would be an advantage and that we need better advertisement on the different options.

Councilor Nicastro asked if he is a registered voter to which Mr. Monteiro replied yes.

Jimmy Jael Valentin was next invited to the podium.

Mr. Valentin that he is active attending Council meetings and city events hosted by the Mayor. He is a graduate of South Eastern's Class of 2019. He said he participated in every program that was offered and now feels it is his time to give back to both his school and city. Mr. Valentin said he is a life long resident of Brockton and is bilingual speaking Spanish and English fluently. He believes he can represent the City because he has first hand experience of what it's like to be a student at South Eastern. Southern has a diverse community and he believes the School Committee should represent this. There is a growing population of ELL students and their voice should be heard. Mr. Valentin believes we should have representation from all economic and age groups.

Councilor Lally commented that there were five people who expressed interest in this position, which is fantastic. Councilor Lally said he was concerned about the future of the seat and asked if appointed, would you run for reelection to which Mr. Valentin replied that he would run for reelection. He would also run even if not appointed at this time.

Vice Chairman D'Agostino thanked Mr. Valentin for putting his name in and asked, since he is a South Eastern alumni, what would you do or change and what can we expect to see from you. Mr. Valentin replied he would like to help out the students who chose to go to South Eastern. He would like to help students that are bilingual by expanding the ELL program.

Councilor Farwell commented that you should not let anyone dissuade you from your dreams and to maintain your confidence and commitment. Mr. Valentin thanked him and mentioned that he aspires to be the first Hispanic President of the U.S by 2050.

School Committee Sullivan commended Mr. Valentin on his enthusiasm. School Committee Sullivan asked if he was familiar with the School Committee subcommittees and how the subcommittees work at South Eastern. President Asack stated that after questions for the candidate are completed, we can ask question of the School Committee chair. School Committee

Sullivan then asked if he is prepared to get on subcommittees. Mr. Valentin replied yes and that he is prepared to take on the challenge.

Councilor Lally commented that when you turn 18, you are allowed to vote and run for office and serve your country in the armed forces. He expressed his displeasure that some with us here today that do not take a candidate with youth seriously.

Councilor Nicastro asked if Mr. Valentin was a registered voter to which he replied yes.

Councilor Mendes thanked Mr. Valentin for speaking to her on the phone and that she was impressed with him and that it is great to see young people getting involved.

President Asack asked if the members had any further questions for any candidates. South Eastern Regional School Committee Chair Robin Zoll was invited to the podium to answer questions. President Asack asked if there were any current teachers serving on the committee. Ms. Zoll answered no, but there are retired teachers including herself.

School Committee Sullivan asked how the subcommittees are divided up and if they are assigned by the Chair. Ms. Zoll explained there are several committees and most members are on three subcommittees. Ms. Zoll continued that the committee members do not represent our own communities, positions are elected at large and they represent the entire district.

Councilor Rodrigues commented that many questions addressed related to diversity in the community and that Brockton is one of the more diverse communities, along with students. He said he has worked with the school's guidance department to help bridge the gap between parents and students at that school. He asked what is the ethnic makeup of her committee and are there any multi-lingual individuals on the committee. Ms. Zoll stated that Mr. Branch was currently the only member of color. Ms. Zoll stated diversity is not always ethnicity and that the members come from several diverse communities. Councilor Rodrigues clarified that he was talking about language diversity. Ms. Zoll said there are not people who speak other languages but that doesn't stop the committee from their primary responsibilities. She doesn't believe that matters for the School Committee. Councilor Rodrigues stated it might not matter to Ms. Zoll, but it matters to a lot of us.

Councilor Cardoso stated she disagreed with Ms. Zoll. She said if you are going to sit on a committee and represent a city that's majority is minorities, you have to have the ability to speak the language and relate to the students. President Asack reminded that Ms. Zoll was here to answer any technical questions.

President Asack asked the members, at this time, is the Council prepared to vote for a candidate to fill the unexpired term of Mark Linde to the South Eastern Regional School Committee. President Asack read the candidates names and called for a roll call vote.

The total votes cast for each candidate after balloting is as follows:

Nancy deMacedo-Fernandes	0
Ray Henningson	3
Ossie L. Jordan, Jr.	3
Gerson S. Monteiro	11
Jimmy Jael Valentin	1

Gerson Monteiro was determined to be the highest voted candidate to fill out the unexpired term of Mark Linde to the South Eastern Regional School Committee.

President Asack congratulated Mr. Monteiro and thanked all of the candidates. She told Mr. Monteiro to contact the Clerk to make arrangements to be sworn in. She thanked the Mayor, School Committee Vice Chair and all members of the Council and School Committee.

Councilor Cruise stated there were five amazing and diverse candidates tonight, which brought many different powers to the table. Councilor Cruise said it is not unusual to have nobody step up for openings in government positions. The fact that we had so many step forward talks about the quality of the people in Brockton. There are shamrock plants for all members and the audience. The coronavirus unfortunately canceled the Council on Aging St. Patrick's Day party along with the Public Safety mass. State representative Gerry Cassidy has kept up the tradition of the late Senator Tom Kennedy to buy shamrocks for everyone. Councilor Cruise asks all to stay safe.

Mayor Sullivan thanked all members and candidates and said this was exciting for Brockton. Mayor Sullivan stated he has a conference call with the Governor tomorrow regarding the coronavirus. He stated this is a very serious health crisis. Everyone needs to be cognizant of the fact that this is a health crisis and that Governor Baker declared a state of emergency yesterday. Mayor Sullivan asked all to not panic, do the right thing and to follow guidelines for hand washing for 20 seconds minimum. City Hall is being disinfected consistently as are the schools, including school buses. If you are having symptoms, call your doctor and self-isolate. The City is acting diligently with health care professionals to address this in a serious and professional manner.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50PM