



116 W. Beverley Street
Staunton, Virginia 24401
Phone 540-332-3920 • Fax 540-332-3924
www.staunton.k12.va.us

NEWS

January 31, 2017 – School Board Makes Interim Appointment to Fill Vacancy

Contact: Brenda Lovekamp, School Board Clerk
540-332-3920
blovekam@staunton.k12.va.us

SCHOOL BOARD MAKES INTERIM APPOINTMENT TO FILL VACANCY

(STAUNTON, VA) – At a called meeting on Monday, January 30, the Staunton City School Board selected former long-time school board member, Angela Whitesell, as an interim appointment to the Staunton City School Board, filling the vacancy created in December with the passing of fellow school board member, Joel “Jody” Grogan.

The board advertised the process to be used to fill the vacancy in early January and began accepting letters of interest and qualifications. Of the 14 persons who responded, the board selected seven candidates for further consideration, two of which later withdrew, leaving a final panel of five candidates. At a called meeting on Wednesday, January 18, the final five candidates responded to a series of questions, provided to them beforehand, relating to: the value of public education and Staunton City Schools, the purpose of the school board, the skills they would bring to the board, and the goals they would hope to accomplish as a member. Later that evening, the board held a public hearing to gather citizen input and continued their deliberations in a closed meeting, and met again in a closed meeting for further consideration at the beginning of the meeting on January 30. School Board Chair, Ronald Ramsey explained: “The board carefully weighed the candidates’ qualifications and responses, and the public’s comments, contemplating those through many filters, including community needs, the desire for more diversity in our school division, and the significant tasks the board will be tackling in the very near future -- specifically, budget development, the high school project, and executing a search for and hiring of a new well-qualified superintendent to lead our school division. With those important tasks in mind, the board needed to select the candidate that we believe is most able to join us in immediately addressing these challenges.”

Mrs. Whitesell, who previously served on the board from July 2002 through June 2014, was administered the oath of office and has officially assumed her duties as a school board member. She expressed her appreciation saying, “I am pleased to once again be a part of the Staunton City School Board and I am ready to get started on the meaningful work that is ahead of this board.” While the term for the vacant seat expires June 30, 2020, Mrs. Whitesell will serve on the Staunton City School Board as an interim appointment only until May 2018, when a special election is held, the voters elect a member to complete the remainder of the term, and the person so elected has qualified for the office.

“Each one of the final candidates possesses a strong skill-set with which to serve this community. As a school board, our plate is full and the next several months are crucial to the future success of our school division,” commented Amy Guffey Darby, who has served on the board since 2010. “At this time, I believe we have appointed the most qualified person, as Mrs. Whitesell has the experience to come to the table and be familiar with those tasks immediately facing this board.”

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