

EXHIBIT K - CB3-15 (Freedman)



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Ethics Tosses Complaints After Beck Officially Resigns from Board of Ed

With Greg Beck's resignation officially filed, the Board of Ethics rendered the complaint hearing moot.

Brookfield, CT

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By AARON BOYD (Patch Staff) - (<http://patch.com/users/aaron-boyd>)  January 9, 2014 1:07 pm ET



The Board of Ethics moved to throw out two complaints against former Board of Education (BOE) member Greg Beck (<http://brookfield.patch.com/groups/politics-and-elections/p/second-ethics-complaint-filed-against-new-board-of-ed-member>) at the start of the complaint hearing Thursday morning as Beck's official resignation from the BOE was submitted earlier in the day.

Beck sent an email to BOE Chairman Scott McCarthy and A Brookfield Party (ABP) Chairman Rob Gianazza Tuesday (<http://brookfield.patch.com/groups/schools/p/confirmed-beck-intends-to-resign-from-board-of-ed>) stating that he intended to resign and submitted his letter to the Town Clerk's Office at 8 a.m. Thursday.

Beck's letter simply reads: "Please accept this as my formal resignation from the Board of Education effective immediately."

The two complaints filed asked that Beck be forced to step down from the BOE due to a comment he posted on a Facebook post (<http://brookfield.patch.com/groups/schools/p/calls-for-board-ed-candidateelects-resignation-after-facebook-comment>) asking for 26 days of kindness leading up to the anniversary of the Dec. 14, 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Beck received pressure from the community, Republican and Democratic party leadership and his own board to step aside and chose to do so earlier this week.

"Once that happened, both complaints and the circumstances surrounding them were moot," Board of Ethics Chairman Alice Carolan said Thursday.

The Ethics Board found probable cause (<http://brookfield.patch.com/groups/politics-and-elections/p/ethics-board-finds-probable-cause-for-hearing-on-becks-sandy-hook-facebook-comment>) on both complaints due to the fact that Beck is also employed by the town as an emergency dispatcher, however the nature of the complaints specifically referred to his role as a member of the BOE.

"We've never had this happen before," Carolan said, adding later that she is "pleased for Mr. Beck that this has been resolved in the way that it has been resolved."

"I thank Mr. Beck for doing the right thing," Sherri Keefe, the first

complaintant, said after the Board of Ethics rendered their decision. "I really appreciate that."

Nancy Lincoln, who filed the second complaint, echoed Keefe's thanks, turning to speak to Beck directly.

Beck sat silently through the brief proceeding and afterward directed questions to his attorney, Brian Parrott.

Parrott maintains that there was no legal basis for the hearing, as probable cause was determined based on his position with the police department and not his status as a then-candidate-elect to the BOE.

"As asinine as Mr. Beck's comments were, they are protected under the 1st Amendment," he said, noting that any ethics consideration was "clearly about his dispatcher position."

Despite that legal challenge, Beck ultimately decided to resign rather than act as a hinderance to the BOE, according to Parrott.

"He attended two meetings as a member and it was clear that he was serving as a distraction," Parrott said.

When asked about potentially running for an elected position at a later date, Beck said that would "definitely be a decision for the future."

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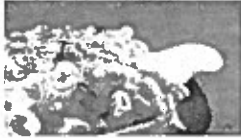
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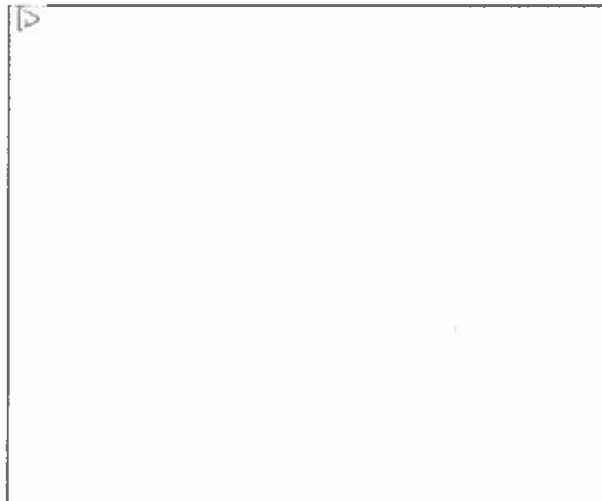
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L
EXHIBIT L - CB3-15 (Freedman)

From: Floyd Dugas <fdugas@bmdlaw.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 8:51 PM
To: newtownboe@newtown.k12.ct.us
Cc: Debbie Leidlein
Subject: Dr. Erardi

Floyd J. Dugas, Esq.
Berchem, Moses & Devlin, P.C.
75 Broad Street
Milford, Connecticut 06460
Tel: 203-783-1200
Fax: 203-882-0045
fdugas@bmdlaw.com
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From: Keith Alexander <alexanderk_boe@newtown.k12.ct.us>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 8:55 PM
To: fdugas@bmdlaw.com
Cc: Debbie Leidlein
Subject: Re: Dr. Erardi

Debbie and Floyd,

--Keith

On Tue, Jan 14, 2014 at 8:51 PM, Floyd Dugas <fdugas@bmdlaw.com> wrote:

Floyd J. Dugas, Esq.

Berchem, Moses & Devlin, P.C.

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Milford, Connecticut 06460

Tel: 203-783-1200

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--

Respectfully,

Keith Alexander
Newtown Board of Education
<http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/>

From: Kathy Hamilton <KathyLHamilton@att.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 9:44 PM
To: fdugas@bmdlaw.com
Cc: newtownboe@newtown.k12.ct.us; Debbie Leidlein
Subject: Re: Dr. Erardi

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 14, 2014, at 8:51 PM, Floyd Dugas <fdugas@bmdlaw.com> wrote:

Floyd J. Dugas, Esq.
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From: Laura Roche <lrocheboe@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 9:51 PM
To: fdugas@bmdlaw.com
Cc: newtownboe@newtown.k12.ct.us; Debbie Leidlein
Subject: Re: Dr. Erardi

Floyd -

Laura

On Tuesday, January 14, 2014, Floyd Dugas wrote:

Floyd J. Dugas, Esq.

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Tel: 203-783-1200

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From: Michelle Embree Ku <michelleku.boe@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 9:52 PM
To: fdugas@bmdlaw.com
Cc: newtownboe@newtown.k12.ct.us; Debbie Leidlein
Subject: Re: Dr. Erardi

Michelle

On Tue, Jan 14, 2014 at 8:51 PM, Floyd Dugas <fdugas@bmdlaw.com> wrote:

Floyd J. Dugas, Esq.

Berchem, Moses & Devlin, P.C.

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From: David Freedman <dcfreedman@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 9:55 PM
To: newtownboe
Subject: Fwd: Dr. Erardi

Apparently i deleted the rest of the board when I replied with my response. See below

Regards,
David

Begin forwarded message:

From: David Freedman <dcfreedman@hotmail.com>
Date: January 14, 2014 at 9:46:16 PM EST
To: "KathyLHamilton@att.net" <KathyLHamilton@att.net>
Cc: "fdugas@bmdlaw.com" <fdugas@bmdlaw.com>, Debbie Leidlein <boedebbie@gmail.com>, Laura Roche <lrcheboe@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Dr. Erardi

Regards,
David

On Jan 14, 2014, at 9:43 PM, "Kathy Hamilton" <KathyLHamilton@att.net> wrote:

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 14, 2014, at 8:51 PM, Floyd Dugas <fdugas@bmdlaw.com> wrote:

Floyd J. Dugas, Esq.
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From: Keith Alexander <alexanderk_boe@newtown.k12.ct.us>
Sent: Tuesday, January 14, 2014 10:02 PM
To: David Freedman
Cc: newtownboe
Subject: Re: Dr. Erardi

I had actually intentionally responded only to Debbie and Floyd because I forgot that email was part of the non-meeting stuff. :(

--Keith

On Tue, Jan 14, 2014 at 9:54 PM, David Freedman <dcfreedman@hotmail.com> wrote:
Apparently i deleted the rest of the board when I replied with my response. See below

Regards,
David

Begin forwarded message:

From: David Freedman <dcfreedman@hotmail.com>
Date: January 14, 2014 at 9:46:16 PM EST
To: "KathyLHamilton@att.net" <KathyLHamilton@att.net>
Cc: "fdugas@bmdlaw.com" <fdugas@bmdlaw.com>, Debbie Leidlein <boedebbie@gmail.com>, Laura Roche <lrocheboe@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: Dr. Erardi

Regards,
David

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Respectfully,

Keith Alexander
Newtown Board of Education
<http://www.newtown.k12.ct.us/>

<http://www.myrecordjournal.com/129/locals-say-erardi-will-be-missed-if-he-leaves.html>

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Locals say Erardi will be missed if he leaves

Complete text of Southington Superintendent Joseph V. Erardi Jr.'s email to staff

There is not another job in the country that I would be interested in other than in Newtown. Over time, as a school leader, you realize what you do well. I looked at what I believe were positive professional attributes within my personal skill set and became a part of their search process. I was informed Saturday that I am the candidate of choice in Newtown. Newtown officials will be in Southington for a site visit on Friday.

I share this with you as bittersweet information.

Respectfully,

JE

Published: January 9, 2014 | Last Modified: January 10, 2014 03:10PM

By Jesse Buchanan and Farrah Duffany Record-Journal staff

SOUTHINGTON — School Superintendent Joseph V. Erardi Jr. is the top candidate among Newtown education officials to lead that town's school district.

Jacqueline Jacoby, senior search consultant with the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, said Newtown officials will visit Southington on Friday. It's the only site visit scheduled and one of the last steps for finalists, she said.

About 30 applications were received, said Jacoby, who is advising the Newtown search committee. In an e-mail to Southington school teachers and staff, Erardi said he was the "candidate of choice" in Newtown's search for a lead educator.

"Over time, as a school leader, you realize what you do well. I looked at what I believe were positive professional attributes within my personal skill set and became a part of their search process," Erardi said in the email.

He didn't return calls for comment Wednesday.

Jacoby said focus groups and community surveys were used in compiling a leadership profile for the new superintendent. Among the challenges listed by participants was restoring "a sense of safety and security in both the schools and the community with recognition that recovery efforts will require a long term commitment."

"The new superintendent must communicate well, often and consistently regardless of the audience, speaking with honesty, be courageous and on occasion gracefully assertive," the profile said.

Newtown Board of Education Chairwoman Laura Roche referred comment to a statement on the school district's website.

"The Board of Education will have no further comment until it is prepared to take official action on the hiring," the statement said. "Any hiring will take place at a public meeting."

Since 2007 when Erardi began as the Southington superintendent, he has worked on community-building by forming numerous committees and focus groups.

For two years before coming to Southington he was the superintendent in Watertown and before that he spent five years as Bolton's superintendent.

One initiative he started in town is the Southington Education Foundation, a non-profit organization that helps students with educational opportunities by raising money to fund grants. Since its inception in 2009, the group has given out about \$100,000 worth of grants to fund new projects without using taxpayer money.

Dawn Miceli, the chairwoman of the organization and town councilor, has been working with Erardi on the foundation since 2009.

"It's been tremendously successful and you have to give him the credit," Miceli said. "The fact is that (Erardi) understood the value of an education foundation... and look where we've come since then."

A Veterans Committee was also established a couple of years ago where local veterans work with the schools to visit, put on presentations for students, and more. It was steered by Erardi.

Steve Pintarich, a member of the Veterans Committee, said Erardi has been "fantastic" to work with and that it would be "very hard" to replace a leader with the strong partnership they have, but understood why Erardi would leave if he gets the position.

"If I was in Newtown, he's the person that I would want to come down and lead because those kids down there and families need help," Pintarich said, referring to the Newtown community trying to move forward in the wake of the December 2012 shooting that left 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

The shooter Adam Lanza killed himself as police arrived on scene. His mother was found dead at the family's home later that day.

Southington school board member David Derynoski, a Democrat, said the board would move quickly to fill the position if Erardi is chosen to lead Newtown schools.

Erardi is in the first year of a three-year contract, but the superintendent can leave at any time as long as he gives 90 days notice. Derynoski said that he'd like Erardi to stay until the end of the school year, but that it's not required by the contract.

In July, Erardi received a 2.3 percent pay increase from the school board, bringing his salary for 2013-14 to \$173,910.

Erardi would "absolutely" be missed if he were to leave Southington.

"He's been a fixture here in the entire town, not just in the school district but in the entire town," Derynoski said. "If he leaves, it's going to be hard to find someone to fill his shoes."

Karen Smith has been the assistant superintendent for the district since April 2011. For 15 years before that, she was the principal at Derynoski School, the largest elementary school in the district, and has been in education for more than 30 years.

According to the Danbury News-Times, the former Newtown school superintendent left in May to take a job in Stratford. Friction between Janet Robinson and Newtown school board Chairwoman Laura Roche had existed before the shooting and continued in the aftermath.

Robinson's salary was \$197,000, according to the Connecticut Post.

John Reed, a previous Newtown superintendent, is filling the position until a replacement is found.

Newtown had more than 5,100 students enrolled in the 2012-13 school year. Southington has about 6,700.

Many school and town officials, teachers and community leaders used the word "bittersweet" at the thought of Erardi leaving the school district.

Tina Riccio, a Southington High School foreign language teacher, said she was "devastated" when she heard the news and saw the email, calling Erardi the "best superintendent" the district has had and questioned how the district could "fill his shoes" if he does leave.

"Some of us were talking yesterday when the word was out that it's sort of our gift to Newtown," Riccio said. "They need him. He's a tremendous person."

Riccio worked closely with him over the past four years as part of his administrative aspirant program where she and a handful of others learned the administrative ropes with guidance from Erardi.

Miceli said she was confident Erardi would not leave Southington without helping with the transition.

"We have a lot going on right now but (Erardi) will leave us in a good position if he does indeed go. I don't think that he would leave things undone or someone not in control of them," Miceli said. "I have the highest regard for him."