

Sea Isle picks late-applying school board member

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Ocean City Sentinel

SEA ISLE CITY - The newest member of the Sea Isle City Board of Education was sworn in on Tuesday,

July 26. Brian Emery joined the board during Tuesday night's meeting, filling the vacancy left by Michael McHale. McHale, former mayor of Sea Isle City, resigned in early

July to join the newly formed city council.

Immediately following Emery's swearing in, questions began as to whether he should be seated on the board.

The deadline to file a letter of interest to fill the board vacancy was June 30. Emery's letter was dated July 11.

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Late candidate gets school board spot

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The only other candidate, Barbara Drew, had filed prior to the deadline.

Resident Valere Egnasko raised the point during public comment. She questioned why the search period for the board vacancy was extended when the board already had one applicant apply. She also questioned the extension of the deadline without the public being notified.

Egnasko was not questioning Emery's qualifications. She was challenging the board's action to accept his letter past the advertised deadline, and questioned if the board had considered that during discussions at the July 19 meeting.

Staff member Lorye Craver, assistant to the school business administrator,

explained the reason for accepting Emery's letter.

Craver said that prior to the June 30 deadline Emery had contacted the school, inquiring about applying for the vacancy. Craver, who was hired in November 2006, said she was unfamiliar with the process of filing, and contacted school business administrator Earl Vasallo for clarification. She then contacted Emery, but said that he evidently was not given the message regarding how and when to apply. Because of the confusion on her part, Craver said, Emery missed the June 30 deadline and therefore his July 11 letter was accepted.

At the July 19 board meeting, both Emery and Drew attended. At that time they each presented their experience

and reasons for wanting to serve on the school board. The board members adjourned into a brief executive session and, upon returning, voted 5-0 to appoint Emery.

Egnasko and several board members asked solicitor Warren Gaskill to research any legalities regarding the appointment and missed deadline.

Board members Tom Szczurek, Ellen Ramsey and Joseph Schmidt were not present at that meeting.

Emery had submitted a petition to run for the school board in April, but then withdrew his name from consideration. Emery will serve until the school elections of April 2008. At that time, the one year terminating on McHale's original term will appear on the ballot.