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**LICATA**

properly prepare for the next superintendent.”

When asked during a press conference later, Licata declined to name the medical condition or say whether it involved a life-or-death situation.

In the same press conference, Hepburn wished Licata well and said he’s excited for his unforeseen promotion.

“I am so elated to continue to focus to move our school district to an A,” Hepburn said, referring to the state-issued grade for performance. The state has rated Broward Public Schools with a B for about nine years.

**‘SUCH A SHOCK’**

Most School Board members voiced surprise after Licata’s news shook the room Tuesday. They also raised concerns of instability in the school district because Licata was the third official superintendent in the past five years.

“It’s such a shock; it’s hard to absorb all of this,” said School Board member Allen Zeman during the meeting.

The School Board voted 8-1 to mutually separate from Licata before December. Board members asked Chair Lori Alhadeff to negotiate a shorter transitional period.

The board also voted 8-1 to name Hepburn as the new superintendent. Board member Daniel Foganholi was the lone dissenter after raising issues about paying two superintendents at the same time.

Alhadeff said the board chose to shorten Licata’s departure to lessen the blow of instability as much as possible.

Hepburn, a native of Belle Glade in Palm Beach County, served as a middle- and high-school principal in Orange County

Public Schools from 2011 to 2016, according to his LinkedIn page. He then moved to the Palm Beach County school district as an instructional superintendent from 2016 to 2023.

He joined Broward Public Schools on Aug. 1, roughly a month after Licata.

Speaking to reporters after the board’s vote, Licata described Hepburn as “smart,” “charismatic” and “very focused on kids.” He said that because Hepburn is with him during most of his days, “this is easiest way to transition.”

**THIRD OFFICIAL SUPERINTENDENT IN BROWARD IN FIVE YEARS**

In turn, Hepburn described Licata as “a boss, a mentor and a friend.”

He said he and Licata have always aligned in terms of vision and mission, and that none of the school district’s priorities will change. He will still work toward improving academics and “redefining” schools, the term used to close or repurpose schools because of student under-enrollment.

Board members thanked Licata on Tuesday for his tenure. Sarah Leonardi said Licata is the best superintendent she has worked with, and Alhadeff said Licata was the only superintendent “willing to discuss how to redefine schools.” Debbie Hixon, the board’s vice chair, said the community loves him, and that he’s a “very innovative forward-thinking person.”

When the board officially replaced him, Licata stood up to leave the dais, and everyone in the conference room rose and applauded.

He left his “dream job” as the superintendent of Broward Public Schools after roughly 10 months.

“It was shorter than I wanted to be here,” he



Superintendent Peter Licata, center, addresses attendees of the ‘Redefining Our Schools’ workshop as he, School Board members and members of the community discuss repurposing some schools on March 20 in Fort Lauderdale. On Tuesday, one School Board member said Licata’s departure is ‘such a shock; it’s hard to absorb all of this.’



Asked why he wanted the superintendent’s job, Howard Hepburn chuckled and said: ‘I love complex and challenging environments.’

said in the press conference.

The School Board picked Licata in June following a national search and officially hired him in July with an annual salary of \$350,000 with the possibility of an additional \$20,000 in performance bonuses.

Licata replaced Vickie Cartwright, a controversial superintendent who was fired then rehired in late 2022. She ultimately left by mutual separation in early 2023 with almost \$268,000 in severance. Cartwright replaced

Robert Runcie, who left under a \$754,900 separation agreement. Runcie stepped down in May 2021 after he was accused of lying to a statewide grand jury investigating the Broward district. He pleaded not guilty, and a judge dismissed the case in April 2023.

**‘TASK-ASSIGNED’ SUPERINTENDENT OPTION TRASHED**

Board member Brenda Fam said during Tuesday’s meeting that she supported Licata passing the baton to Hepburn because of their mutual history.

“These two men worked as a team,” she said. But not all of her colleagues agreed.

At least two board members, Foganholi and Torey Alston, suggested naming Hepburn as a “task-assigned” superintendent temporarily instead of hiring him long-term right away. Foganholi advocated for more community input, and Alston feared a “rushed decision.”

Ultimately, the board chose to lock him in.

Leonardi said the district has done two national searches in the past five years and she’s not interested in spending an-

other \$50,000 for a third search.

“I think it makes sense for a deputy superintendent to move into this position,” she said.

“I’m really interested in righting this ship. I’m not interested in doing task-assigned or interim or another national search that I was unimpressed with,” she added.

Alhadeff said she recently wrote a recommendation letter for Hepburn and worried another school district could steal him.

And Board member Nora Rupert worried that not naming a superintendent quickly would bring back the “crazy carousel of chaos” — what she called the Cartwright debacle in 2022.

“I can slightly hear the carnival music, and I don’t want it to get here,” she said, eliciting laughs from the audience.

**MORE ABOUT HEPBURN**

In the press conference after he was named the new superintendent, Hepburn talked about growing up in Belle Glade. The city in western Palm Beach County has experienced social challenges and as of 2022 had a population of about 16,700, according to

the U.S. Census.

“You guys can look that up and see all of the challenges and complexities of such a small community in probably one of the richest counties in the state,” he said. “We have great teachers, great principals, great mentors. It took a village to really help kids like myself in that community grow up and prosper to change our trajectories. And that’s what I’m here for. I love complex environments, and I want to do the same for the kids that we’re serving here in Broward County.”

Asked why he wanted the superintendent’s job, Hepburn chuckled and said: “I love complex and challenging environments.”

Hepburn earned a bachelor’s degree in science education and a master’s degree in educational leadership from the University of Central Florida. He also holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Florida Southern College, according to the Broward school district.

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**CITY OF DORAL**  
**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on **WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024** the City of Doral will hold a **Public Hearing** at **6:00 p.m.** The Meeting will take place at the **City of Doral Government Center Council Chambers**, located at **8401 NW 53 Terrace, Doral, Florida 33166.**

The following Ordinance(s) will be considered for **FINAL ADOPTION** on **SECOND READING:**

**Ordinance #2024-12**  
**“FY 23-24 Budget Amendment”**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, PROVIDING FOR AN AMENDMENT TO THE GENERAL FUND BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024; AN INCREASE TO THE PARK IMPACT FEE FUND BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024; AND AN INCREASE TO THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUND BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024; AS REVIEWED, MODIFIED AND APPROVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL AT THE MEETINGS HELD ON APRIL 10, 2024 AND MAY 8, 2024; PROVIDING FOR TRANSMITTAL BY THE CITY CLERK; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

**Ordinance #2024-13**  
**“Banning Polystyrene Products in City Parks”**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, AMENDING ARTICLE II “RULES AND REGULATIONS” OF CHAPTER 29 “PARKS AND RECREATION” OF THE CITY OF DORAL CODE OF ORDINANCES, TO PROVIDE FOR A BAN OF POLYSTYRENE ARTICLES IN CITY PARKS IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, AND A BAN ON CERTAIN POLYSTYRENE ARTICLES IN CITY PARKS; PROVIDING FOR PENALTIES; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR INCORPORATION INTO THE CODE; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

**Ordinance #2024-14**  
**“Request for Special Election November 2024 Charter Changes”**

AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, CALLING FOR A SPECIAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 5, 2024 FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUBMITTING TO THE ELECTORATE OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, TEN (10) CHARTER AMENDMENTS PREPARED BY THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION, PURSUANT TO SECTION 6.02 OF THE CITY’S CHARTER; APPROVING REQUISITE BALLOT LANGUAGE; PROVIDING FOR COPIES OF THE TEXT OF THE CHARTER AMENDMENTS TO BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION; PROVIDING FOR BALLOTING AND ELECTION PROCEDURES; PROVIDING FOR NOTICE OF ELECTION; PROVIDING FOR AUTHORIZATION; PROVIDING FOR IMPLEMENTATION; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR INCLUSION IN THE CHARTER; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

If a person decides to appeal any decision made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at a meeting or hearing, that person will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in this public hearing should contact the Office of the City Clerk at 8401 NW 53 Terrace, Doral, Florida; telephone number (305) 593-6730, no later than three (3) business days prior to such proceedings.

**Connie Diaz, MMC**  
City Clerk, City of Doral

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