

TENTATIVE BUDGET HEARING

GADSDEN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
 MAX D. WALKER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
 35 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD.
 QUINCY, FLORIDA 32351

August 1, 2023

6:00 P.M.

The tentative budget hearing was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Mrs. Karema D. Dudley; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; Mr. Charlie D. Frost; and Mr. Steve Scott. Also present were Mr. Elijah Key, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board; Mrs. Deborah Minnis, Attorney for the Board; and others.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The tentative budget hearing was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, at 6:00 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Mr. Charlie D. Frost.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

Mr. McMillan made an apology for the way the last Board meeting went. He thanked everyone for what they are doing. He stated that he hoped everyone will move forward as a Board.

4. PUBLIC HEARING – Tentative Budget and Millage Rate

- a. Approval of Resolution Number 23-01 for the Tentative Millage Rates for the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year

Fund Source: General Fund and Capital Project

Amount: Refer to millage rates and amounts stated on the Resolution

Mr. Mays stated that in accordance to Chapters 200 and 1011, Florida Statutes, the Board needed to approve the tentative millage rates for the fiscal year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. He stated that the Required Local Effort including Prior Period Funding Adjustment was 3.201 and the proposed amount to be raised was \$7,661.343. He stated that the total millage rate to be levied is more than the roll-back rate computed pursuant to Section 200.065(1), F.S. by 16.13 percent.

In response to Mr. Scott's concern regarding an explanation of the difference with the previous RLE and the current RLE, he stated that he was concerned there were no changes on the budget balances. Mr. Mays stated that the calculations were done by the entity doing the table. He stated that the budget and revenues did not change. He stated that the current calculations were vetted with the Department of Revenue.

Following discussion and Mr. McMillan's reading of Resolution No. 23-01, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #4a. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Approval of Resolution Number 23-02 for the 2023 -2024 Tentative Budget for fiscal year 2023 – 2024

Fund Source: All Funds Budget

Amount: Refer to tentative budget

Mr. Mays stated that in accordance to Chapters 200 and 1011, Florida Statutes, the Board needed to approve the tentative millage rates and the tentative budget for the fiscal year July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. He stated that the tentative budget was in the amount \$70,510,116.69.

Following discussion and Mr. McMillan’s reading of Resolution No. 23-02, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve agenda item #4b. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

5. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

- a. Insurance Proposal and Rates for the 2023 – 2024 Fiscal Year

Mr. John Pat Thomas, Pat Thomas Insurance Agency, addressed the Board to share the proposed health and dental insurance rates for the 2023 – 2024 year. He stated that there is a 4% overall rate increase on the health insurance. He stated that there would be no change with the dental premium.

Mr. Mays stated that the health insurance rate increase was previously figured into the budget and is affordable because some things have been moved to other funding sources.

Following discussion, Mrs. Karema D. Dudley made a motion for the Board to absorb the 4% health insurance rate increase for employees in the amount of \$14, 227.01 monthly. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

Mr. Thomas stated that the open enrollment process would begin in Thursday (August 3rd) morning. He stated that the Board will be provided with a schedule of open enrollment dates. He stated that presentations will be at the individual schools and the staff will have an opportunity to schedule appointment times with the vendors.

Ms. Johns stated that she was concerned about having an opportunity to bid health insurance with other providers. She stated that there might be a possibility for the School Board, City and County to come together as one regarding insurance.

Mr. McMillan stated that the city, county and school board are separate entities.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

6. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

None.

7. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Johnson requested the organization chart to be part of the final budget hearing. She stated that she wants to discuss line-by-line items on the budget.

Mrs. Dudley stated that more funding was needed for the Gadsden Education Foundation to help support schools and student incentives. She asked that the issue with the AC unit at Stewart Street Elementary School be revisited. She stated that she wants to ensure that things are comfortable for students and staff.

Ms. Judith Mandela, teacher, addressed the Board and commented on the Teacher-of-the-Year (TOY) Gala. She stated that Mr. Pierre Lewis, TOY from Gadsden County High School, attended the TOY GALA. She stated that there is a surge in COVID cases. She wanted to know if there would be additional masks and cleaning supplies for the schools. She stated that she still wants an update on the ESSER II funding. She stated that at the last meeting she requested an investigation on the teacher evaluation model. She stated that the teachers have seen the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model, but the new Instructional Evaluation Model has not been seen by some of the teachers.

Mr. Key stated that the principals, assistant principals and teachers were provided training on the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model. He stated that the new Instructional Evaluation Model was approved by the Department of Education in December of last year. He stated that principals and teachers were provided training on the new instructional evaluation model.

Ms. Mandela stated that some of the teachers did not have an opportunity to go over the new instructional evaluation model. She asked will there be an investigation and would teachers be held harmless. She stated that there was pre-conference for some teachers. She stated that there was no improvement plan for some teachers. She stated that is a statutory violation.

Mrs. Minnis stated that more information was needed before the Board could make a decision on the issue with the teacher evaluation model.

Following a lengthy discussion, Mr. McMillan asked Ms. Mandela and the GCCTA President to meet with the Superintendent to further discuss the issue with teachers and the new Instructional Evaluation Model.

8. The tentative budget hearing adjourned at 7:31 p.m.