

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

July 23, 2024

6:00 P.M.

This meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mrs. Karema D. Dudley, Chairwoman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, Ms. Cathy S. Johnson, 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. Mr. Charlie D. Frost was absent.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairwoman, Mrs. Karema D. Dudley, at 6:00 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Elder Daryl Wymes, Associate Elder at Mt. Olive Freewill Baptist Church.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Mr. Gary Russ, Volunteer Coordinator, introduced the Volunteers of the Year 2023 – 2024: Youth – Abrams Barnes (George W. Munroe Elementary School; Volunteer – Mr. Terill “TJ” Shaw, Jr. (Family and Community Engagement Program); and Senior Volunteer – Mr. Victor Sanchez (Gadsden Technical College). Retirees for the 2023 – 2024 year: Ms. Rosita Ali, Ms. Deborah Bailey, Ms. Tamaria Chandler, Ms. Jonnie Clarke, Ms. Mary Ann Edwards, Ms. Carolyn Francis, Ms. Cynthia Goldwire, Ms. Renesha Jackson, Ms. Rosemary Jackson, Ms. Geraldine Kenon, Ms. Mary Lanier, Ms. Barbara McCall, Ms. Sonja Regina Munroe, Mr. Willie Reed, Mr. Calvin Robinson, Ms. Patricia Robinson, Ms. Mary Rutten, Ms. Sylvia Sanders, and Mr. Jimmy Taylor. Each of the Volunteers and Retirees received a plaque award. Board members and the Superintendent thanked the volunteers and retirees for their service.

Mrs. Dudley acknowledged Mrs. Andrea Messina with the Florida School Boards Association. Mrs. Messina presented the Board and Superintendent with a plaque award for completing the Master Board Program.

Mr. Scott thanked everyone that was involved in the dedication of the Robert L. Jackson Memorial Field, and the Greensboro Kiwanis Club for fireworks on July 4th.

5. CITIZEN COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

None.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mrs. Dudley entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. The motion was made by Mr. Steve Scott, seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

6. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. June 18, 2024, 4:00 p.m. – Special School Board Meeting
- b. June 25, 2024, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Financial Workshop

c. June 25, 2024, 6:00 p.m. – Regular School Board Meeting

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)

a. Personnel 2023 – 2024

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Personnel 2024 – 2025

Ms. Key stated that Ms. Sophia Grandison requested that her resignation be rescinded.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. AGREEMENTS/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

a. Request Approval of Service Contract

Fund Source: Title I Funds

Amount: \$55,000.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Items preceded by an (*) asterisk were removed from the CONSENT agenda at the beginning of the meeting and moved to the DISCUSSION portion of the agenda.

*9. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

a. James A. Shanks Middle School Football Team Out-of-State Field Trip Request

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Mr. McMillan stated that the Board needed to know all the student athletes that were going on the field trip.

Mr. Key stated that information on the student athletes would be provided when the football team members are selected.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Gadsden County High School Volleyball Team Out-of-State Field Trip Request

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

Mr. McMillan stated that the Board needed to know all the chaperones and student athletes that were going on the field trip.

Mr. Key stated that he was waiting on a recommendation for a volleyball coach, and that information on the volleyball coach and student athletes will be provided.

Following discussion, Mr. Leroy McMillan made a motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #'s 9a & 9b while awaiting additional information. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

10. PROPOSED TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 – 2025

Mrs. Bruner shared with the Board the proposed tentative budget for fiscal year 2024 – 20225. She stated that the required local effort (RLE) including the prior period adjustment millage was 3.1390. She stated that the basic discretionary operating expenses were 0.7480. She stated that the basic discretionary capital outlay was 1.5000. She stated that the total millage to be levied was 5.3870. She stated that the total expenditures, transfers and balances were \$104,862,717.22. She stated that the proposed operating budget expenditures of the School Board of Gadsden County are 26.8% more than last year’s total operating expenditures. She stated that the final budget hearing would be held September 3rd.

Ms. Johnson stated that she wanted to make sure that all required budget documents were sent to the Department of Education on time.

11. REQUEST PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE THE PROPOSED TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 – 2025

Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to approve permission to advertise the proposed tentative budget hearing for fiscal year 2024 – 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leroy McMillan and carried unanimously.

12. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that changes might be made to the school grading scale. He stated that some school grades maybe lower. He stated that the Commissioner of Education was available on August 14th for the groundbreaking ceremony for the new K-8 school. Mrs. Dudley and Ms. Johnson stated that they thought the dates were already set for the groundbreaking ceremony. Mr. Scott stated that he was concerned about having higher-ranking officials at the groundbreaking ceremony. Ms. Johnson recommended Mrs. Dudley make the call to schedule the groundbreaking ceremony. Mr. Key stated that in accordance with Florida Statutes, the Board approves the school building plans, and the Superintendent executes the plans. He stated that a date was needed when everyone could be there. Mrs. Dudley requested that the issue be tabled until next week. She stated that there has been no transparency on the groundbreaking ceremony. She stated that on several occasions, she requested a workshop to discuss the new K-8 school. Mr. Key stated that the original date (August 7th) came from Allstate about the groundbreaking ceremony. He stated that he shared with the Board information on the groundbreaking ceremony when he received it. He stated that he was trying to move forward with the groundbreaking ceremony. Mr. McMillan recommended the Superintendent and Mrs. Dudley meet to discuss a date for the groundbreaking ceremony.

Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept Mr. McMillan’s recommendation for the Superintendent and Mrs. Dudley to meet to discuss a date for the groundbreaking ceremony. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

13. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Johnson stated that she was concerned about when the teachers return to work. Mr. Key stated that teachers return to work on August 5th. He stated that Good Friday would be discussed later. He stated that any other changes will affect the bus drivers and the school food service workers pay. Mrs. Dudley asked Attorney Minnis if the Board was responsible for the school calendars. Mrs. Minnis stated that an amended or changed calendar should be brought back to the Board for approval; she stated that the previous school calendar that was approved by the Board has the teachers reporting back to work on August 5th.

Ms. Johnson invited everyone to One Gadsden Foundation, Inc. Back-to-School and Community Resource Fair on August 11th from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Old Havana Northside High School. She also invited everyone to the Second Harvest Food Drive on August 2nd beginning at 10:00 a.m. at the Havana Community Development Center. She stated that everyone should always remember that children are first. She paraphrased “Every Child, Every Family, Every Teacher, Every Support Staff, Every School, and Everybody Understand That Children Are First”.

Mr. McMillan inquired about the insurance committee meeting regarding the 8.4% increase. He stated that information was needed from the finance director. He asked Mrs. Minnis for an update on the foreclosure on Chattahoochee High School. Mrs. Minnis stated that information was still needed on the original mortgage note and the ledger of payments. Mr. McMillan stated that he has available the original mortgage note and schedule of payments. Mrs. Minnis stated the Chattahoochee High School property is not currently the property of the School Board. She stated that someone has inquired about a payoff amount for the Chattahoochee High School property.

Ms. Gloria McSwain addressed the Board and stated that not everyone received a salary increase. She stated that not everyone could afford the insurance increase. She pleaded with the Board to absorb the insurance increase.

Mr. McMillan asked about the audit for the hurricane funds. Mrs. Minnis stated that the firm is still waiting to gather a list of items for the auditor. Mr. McMillan stated that approximately \$300,000 has been spent on lawn equipment. He stated that lawn service is contracted for several of the schools. He stated that he was concerned about the upkeep of the lawn maintenance at the schools. He stated that the lawn maintenance workers needed to do a better job. In response to the 1/2 cent sales tax, Mr. Key stated that the referendum is waiting to be placed on the November ballot.

Mrs. Dudley asked Mrs. Bruner to provide information on what monies are available. She asked if the Director of ETO position was being filled, Mr. Key stated that probably not at this time.

14. The meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.